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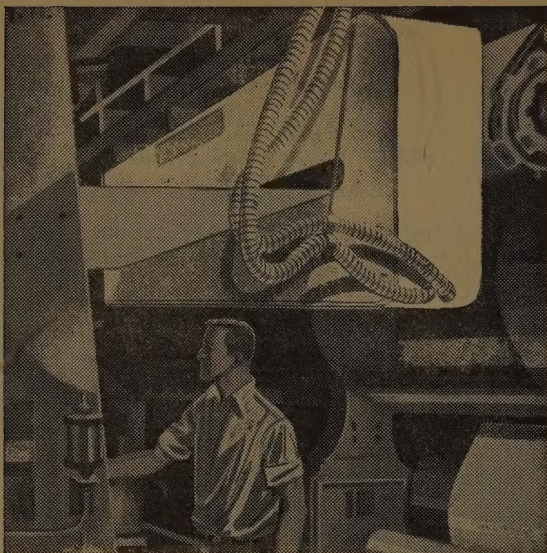
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COMMENT

DAY OF RECKONING FOR THE EDUCATORS

THAT Great American Bubble, progressive education, one of the slickest pieces of fraudulent promotion of the century, has at last been pricked. For some time past competent and responsible people have been asking whether the whole scheme of social adjustment, child-centred curricula, real life experiences, withdrawal of discipline, group dynamics in the class-room, testomania, and automatic up-grading is not in reality an anti-intellectualist onslaught on basic learning, the logical integrity of subjects, the need that children have of guidance, and full opportunity for talented students.

Then came the revelation that the Russian education system, with its insistence on basic academic knowledge and the authority of teachers in the class-room, may (as both Edward Teller and Robert Oppenheimer have warned) have put the Russians ahead for the next generation in decisive fields, thus throwing doubt upon the capacity of American democracy to survive. This has brought the revolt into the open as a national issue. The outraged protestations and the brandishing of misleading statistics and 'scientific' test results by the promoters of the scheme will not satisfy the critics now. *The Times Educational Supplement* (3 January 1958) summed up editorially in uncommonly severe terms: 'It was a comfortable and sometimes almost illiterate racket. . . . This is the dark night of the clerisy.'

In Australia, regression through 'progressivism' has been much less evident, though the infection has been at work. Strangely enough, a main factor in slowing down its ravages has been a feature which is otherwise regrettable, the monolithic centralization of the system in each State, which means that it responds slowly and moves all together if at all. Professor R. Freeman Butts of Columbia University, in his report *Assumptions Underlying Australian Education* acknowledged sadly that the majority of Australian teachers still distrust the approach to which he is accustomed. It is not too late for us to take stock and recover lost ground quickly.

There is no need to imitate the Russian model, which has its own defects of spurious ideological indoctrination and excessive authoritarianism. The Western tradition of intellectual culture, if we adhere to it loyally, can provide all the principles necessary for a further advance. The Swiss model, for instance, would repay study for its combination of tradition and progress.

COMMENT

Practical measures of reform might well start with our teacher-training courses. The drift has been towards the emptying out of any real content in favour of jejune 'method' subjects. Students come from this period of tertiary education with little advance in knowledge of their subjects or in liberal studies generally, but full of 'methods' that are often little better than passing fads. The best preparation for teaching at any level is a liberal tertiary education, training in method being reduced to the minor role that it deserves.

LITERARY COMMITMENT

IN MODERN literature there has been a continuing debate over the need for what the French call *engagement*, that is, open commitment to some moral and above all political cause. The terms '*engagement*' and 'commitment' have not yet made a landfall in Australia, but what they signify has been with us a long time as a matter of debate. Many years ago Bernard O'Dowd opposed Poetry Militant to Poetry Triumphant: the poet, he said, must in the present age directly serve the cause of social progress, leaving to the time when heaven has been established on earth the luxury of poetry written purely for its own sake.

All over the world in the thirties and forties there was an upsurge of 'committed' writing of a peculiarly modern type. The squalid mass of Socialist Realist literature produced under Communist auspices in all countries and the Fascist rubbish produced in Germany and Italy are but the most extreme forms. But inevitably this demand for a militant art has bred a reaction, born of fatigue, disillusionment, and disgust at the corruption of literary values by inartistic tendentiousness. Today the dominant mood has swung to the opposite extreme, to what might best be called *non-committalism*: not only is service in a cause rejected but even any basic conviction whatsoever.

But non-committalism is not a satisfactory solution either. It produces works which are essentially peripheral, flimsy and perishable. Richard Hoggart in his survey of welfare-state popular culture entitled *The Uses of Literacy* speaks of the deterioration of reading and amusement into a 'regular, increasing and almost unvaried diet of sensation without commitment'. The question is whether the literature of the élite is not now written and absorbed in much the same spirit.

Literature cannot avoid involvement in the great issues without impoverishing itself. There is in fact a purely artistic

price to pay for avoidance. Deep personal commitments are not something external to the work of literary creation: they are the very instrument by which experience is penetrated, organized and interpreted: they have a structural value as well as a moral significance. Great works are far more intellectual and *principled* than we nowadays acknowledge. They are not a confetti of impressions whirled about by stray gusts of sentiment.

The striking thing is the degree to which this is a modern problem; one which has become central and urgent with the rise of the modern ideologies. As our general temper of mind becomes utilitarian, pragmatic, morally relativist, or in the popular sense 'materialist' (for even the 'idealism' of intellectuals now has this cast) in the same measure is literature withdrawn from those communal, personal and contemplative values on which it has always depended. The great writers of the past were able to combine what we have riven asunder: moral urgency and intellectual commitment on the one hand, with artistic integrity and creative freedom on the other. Their art could be 'militant' and 'triumphant' at the same time; it could serve without being servile; propagate ideas without losing the disinterested joy of the creative imagination: it was never imprisoned in the false modern alternatives of inartistic activism or sterile non-committalism. We can still learn from them.

AN AWARD FOR QUADRANT CONTRIBUTORS

FOR THE next five years an annual award of one hundred pounds will be made for the contribution to *Quadrant* which is judged to be the most outstanding. We are deeply grateful to Mr Adolph Basser, whose munificence in other fields is well known, for the generous gift which makes possible this tangible encouragement to Australian writing. Stephen Spender and Irving Kristol, the editors of *Encounter*, have kindly consented to act as judges. All contributors who are normally resident in Australia (excluding the editor) will be eligible. Judging will begin from the present issue.

We are also indebted to a donor who wishes to be anonymous, who was prompted by John Bedggood's article on italic handwriting in the December issue to offer a prize in a handwriting competition for schools. Details are given at the foot of page seventy-nine of this issue.

WALKING IN IRELAND

Vincent Buckley

[The three bulls' heads are the presumed arms of the Buckleys]

Everything here, strange in its very nearness,
Perplexes me like the shape of a foreign room.
My foot shrinks from the kindly grass,
And my hands, like leaves dragging against the rain,
Draw down from everything I touch
This low landscape wrinkling in its autumn.
The dog going with a limp tail,
The cock with his red-rimmed drunkard's eye,
And the mincing waterbirds, will turn
To quiz me as I go, with book in pocket,
Who am not of their soil—nor any soil.

How can I find my fathers in this darkness?
Remote and blank as on an heraldic stone
I see them enter their converging lives.
The peasant, with his dung-encrusted boots,
Bearing temple or pyramid on his shoulder;
A priest, with lines of money on his face,
Drawing the signs of his fate from book and candle;
The veteran speaking of forgotten wars
Or wars that never happened;
And the poet strangling words
That come like gouts of blood in a strange language:
These are who look forward to my strangeness,
These build for me a world I cannot know.
Yet still in my groin the goad of ancestry
Stings them awake. Earth livid, earth frozen,
Earth blown over with the turning year,
Unhappy earth, you are mine as well as theirs.
Why, this green mound, with its three cross-trees,
May hide the damp ring of their bones.

And if I should pick my way across the ling,
Holding the fighting brambles back, I might
Come on some indentation there, some rise
Or special colour that would tell me of them;
Or draw some spirit up, to represent
The Irish adam shivering in me,

Pressing their sod, feeling again the archaic
Malice that is the marrow of their bones.
Then priest, soldier, farmer, balladist,
Would pipe for this dance I tread on the foreign road.

And the three bulls' heads on their shield
(Static and stupid, our queer notion of honour)
Gaze sideways at the whirlpool of the past
Yet somehow, still, engage my eyes.
And I turn downward with the year,
Becoming each of my unhappy fathers,
Shrink with the grass, bend like the early rain,
Glance with the cock's red-rimmed eye,
Tread lightly, turning, as the waterbirds,
To see myself against the earth's shield
As against a pall, or tapestry of autumn.
Even on this walk, some deed is done.
Can anything, in the gathering light, be foreign?

ACCEPTANCE

R. H. Morrison

Fountain of fire, cascading sparks, we see
Your golden cornucopia pour out
Its streams of life that circle us about
With winds and currents of its mystery.
Is this our Acherusian Lake where we
Now dwell? No answer. Need we even doubt
The space beyond you? No reply. Devout
And secular are called impartially.
Perhaps we sought something already found,
Forgetting that the search's value lay
In seeking, and all virtue lies in living,
That the rose is no different from the ground
Its petals fall to, nor the breakers' spray
From brine, and any gift no more than giving.

AN OLD SONG

James McAuley

I woke one morning early
Just at the break of day;
The bird whose calling woke me
Shook dewdrops from the spray.
But where was now my swiftness
To match his eager play?
Time that has no returning
Had carried it away.

I looked through the glass of morning
To where the dead years lay;
And therein moved the people
With whom I shared the day.
Where now were the bright visions,
The loves we would not betray?
Time that has no returning
Had carried them away.

I shook with bitter grieving,
Too deep for words to say;
No hope revived to straighten
My spirit's disarray.
Where was the will to render
New life for long dismay?
Time that has no returning
Had carried it away.

AN INSTITUTION IN THE METROPOLIS

FOR THE CENTENARY OF AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL

A. G. Daws

IN THE midwinter of 1858, this letter appeared in the correspondence columns of *Bell's Life in Victoria*:—

Sir: Now that cricket has been put aside for some months to come and cricketers have assumed somewhat of the chrysalis nature (for a time only 'tis true), but at length will again burst forth in all their varied hues, rather than allow this state of torpor to creep over them, and stifle their now supple limbs, why can they not, I say, form a football club, and form a committee of three or more to draw up a code of laws. If a club of this sort were got up, it would be of vast benefit to any cricket ground to be trampled upon, and would make the turf firm and durable; besides which it would keep those who are inclined to become stout from having their joints encased in useless superabundant flesh. If it is not possible to form a football club, why should not these young men who have adopted this new-born country for their native land, why, I say, do they not form themselves into a rifle club, so as at any rate they may be some day called upon to aid their adopted land against a tyrant's band, that may some day 'pop' on us when we least expect a foe at our very doors. Surely our young cricketers are not afraid of the crack of the rifle, when they face so courageously the leathern sphere, and it would disgrace no-one to learn in time how to defend his country and his hearth. A firm hand, a steady heart and a quick eye, are all that are requisite, and, with practice, all these may be attained. Trusting that someone will take up the matter, and form either of the above clubs, or at any rate, some athletic games, I remain, yours truly,

T. W. WILLS

Thomas Wentworth Wills was a formidable young Australian who had been captain of cricket and football at Rugby in the early fifties and had gone on to make himself a quick reputation in English county games. ('He carries a three pound bat and hits terrific.') He came back to Victoria in 1856 and played inter-colonial cricket for several seasons, and it was his obviously lively concern for the off-season fitness of 'young cricketers' that led to the formation of the Melbourne Football Club. Three weeks after he wrote his letter, Wills, his cousin H. C. A.

Harrison, and two other Melbourne Club cricketers drew up a set of rules after a practice game on the Richmond paddock close to the present site of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It was never intended that the local players should stick closely to the lethal Rugby code which had been established in England some twenty years before. 'Fully a moiety of the footballers here are grown men, and don't take a kick so kindly as they would a dozen years ago. Black eyes don't look so well in Collins Street.' No other code yet had a formal existence: Soccer dates from 1863, gridiron from the late sixties, Gaelic football from 1884, and so on. Consequently the game in its early months came under some very diverse and raffish influences, and it was eight seasons before it settled into a steady existence as Australian Rules. Harrison wrote: 'It was a rather go-as-you-please affair at first, but a set of rules was gradually evolved, which experience taught us to be the best.'

The first fully-reported match of the brief 1858 season followed soon after Wills's practice match. Teams of forty were fielded by Scotch College and the Church of England Grammar School. The game was left drawn after almost a month of Saturday afternoon competition. Neither side reached the agreed winning score of two goals, in spite of the tremendous labours of the 'juvenile presbytery and episcopacy' on the quarter-mile-long, tree-covered ground.

The press greeted the 1859 season with enthusiasm: 'Whether that manly and healthy book *Tom Brown's Schooldays* has produced a love for violent exercise . . . it matters not to enquire. . . . Football, like cricket, has become an institution in and around the metropolis, and it would not be surprising if the epidemic spread wider.' St Kilda, Emerald Hill and Prahran played their first games in May; and down in Geelong a militant total-abstinence man added football to his list of activities (hikes and 'sober concerts') aimed at keeping the young men of the Pivot out of the pubs. Each year after that saw an increase in the number of clubs. In spite of difficult playing conditions and primitive organization, football clung to, and enhanced, its position in the life of Melbourne.

Matches were arranged by challenge, and the first side to reach two goals was the winner. Sometimes (as in the Scotch-Grammar game) the game lasted for several weekends before it was decided or abandoned. The longest match recorded in the press involved Melbourne and University, who arranged a game for 17 May 1862 to decide the Caledonian Society Cup competition. University failed to field a team on the first day,

and the match was postponed. Nothing came of an attempt to get the teams together on 31 May 1862, and the season came to an end without further mention of the Cup. The teams eventually met on 18 July 1863: 'No goal was kicked until the Melbourne captain called a muster. It was then discovered that the University men exceeded their adversaries in number by five. These were withdrawn. . . .' The game was resumed, with teams of twenty a side, in the Richmond paddock on 8 August 1863, and both sides scored a goal. A further postponement on 15 August 1863 was necessary because Melbourne found 'difficulty in collecting the rival team'. Bryant of Melbourne kicked a goal on the following Saturday to give his club possession of the Caledonian Society Cup, which they lost in a one-day match at Geelong on 12 September 1863.

University also took part in a very short match. Only eleven players arrived for a game against St Kilda on 1 July 1861. The vacancies in the side were filled by onlookers, but the students went down to defeat in ten minutes.

Games were frequently postponed or abandoned, with or without notice: 'Malgre [*sic*] the non-appearance of the South Yarra players or the receipt of any explanation of their absence . . .' They terminated abruptly because of bad weather: 'A slight shower of rain coming during a game Geelong Volunteers versus civilians to the surprise and amusement of spectators the heroes of "the great battle of the Werribee" turned and fled under cover of their coats, while their opponents stood their ground in spite of the six or seven drops of rain that fell.' On other occasions, 'owing . . . to the almost universal occupation of letter writing previous to the departure of an English mail, there was no football'.

The gum-trees and she-oaks which had added deviousness and subtlety to the 1858 public schools match still made the Melbourne ground 'objectionable' in 1864, and other playing surfaces were no better: 'Many were the slips and spills . . . while some were luckless enough to fall into the drain which adorns the ground.' Even the earnestness of Athletic Sports Committee Cup matches was impaired by local geography: 'Backwards and forwards, on this side and that, now out of bounds—this, unfortunately, was too frequently the case,—amongst the crowd, and again in the ditch by the fence; now into old Dennis's cottage garden, and again kicked into the branches of those horrible gums. . . .' On only one known occasion did trees prove useful. Neil, playing for Eastern Hill-Royal Park against Melbourne in 1864, 'in kicking a ball

from the sides towards the front of the goal, kicked it with considerable force against the stump of a tree from which it rebounded at right angles and went between the goal posts.'

The grounds were unfenced. After four or five seasons, the practice grew up of marking the boundary lines with flags, but, disregarding these, spectators continued to sit and stand about on the playing area as they had always done. 'The single policeman . . . was perfectly helpless to keep order, and contented himself with occasionally ordering the dispersal of knots of small boys, who will assemble in this manner when the game becomes exciting.' At the Melbourne-Richmond game of 5 July 1860, 'the spectators, of whom there were a large number, did not escape scatheless; many of them preferred standing in the middle of the field, and when a rush took place, they were knocked over by the eager players, and were to be seen sprawling in all directions.' Spectators as well as trees exercised a decisive influence on scores: 'After the game had been carried on for some time, a goal was within inches of being kicked by one of the Richmond men; but just as the ball was passing through the posts, it struck a small boy on the head, and glanced off, touching one of the goal posts in its course. The result was, that after playing for upwards of two hours, neither side kicked a goal. The match will therefore be considered as drawn, and the two clubs will have to contend again.'

There was never real agreement amongst players about uniform. Melbourne footballers at first wore the all-white colours of the cricket club, but by 1862, they had become a gaudy lot, 'arrayed in gorgeous colours, some in scarlet, some in blue, others in magenta, a new colour . . . some had curiously-worked parti-coloured caps'.

Interpretations of the rules were as motley as football attire. The main aim of the early rules was to do away with the Rugby practice of running with the ball, because of the inevitable frequent scrimmages, hacking and tripping that went with it. The first revision (in 1859) made things quite clear:

Rule VII: Tripping, holding and hacking are strictly prohibited. Pushing with the hands or body is allowed when any player is in rapid motion, or in possession of the ball, except in the case provided for in Rule VI. (Rule VI allowed for free kicks after marks.)

Rule VIII: The ball may at any time be taken in hand, but not carried further than is necessary for a kick.

'The new rules . . . were observed wonderfully well for the first essay' and continued to be recognized throughout the 1859

season. The sensational press disapproved: 'Though still a manly, it has become a decorous, and to a certain extent tame, pastime . . . in vain do we in these degenerate days anticipate the spectacle of a dozen players rolling on the ground. . . .' Disregarding this criticism, the rule-makers went straight ahead, and in 1860 a rule 'which prohibits the lifting of or running with the ball' was adopted; it 'worked admirably, and was in very few instances infringed'. As long as games were played with a round ball, these rules were viable; but even before the end of the 1860 season, a competing influence was felt:

.....

FOOTBALLS! FOOTBALLS!

Notice to Football Clubs!

George Marshall has just received, expressly to order, a small invoice of the famous Rugby Footballs, which took the Prize Medal at the Exhibition . . . being a new description of ball, made on a scientific principle, and that will fly many yards further than the old-fashioned sort.

.....

There was an immediate reactionary outcry: 'This class of ball may fly further than the round one, but assuredly, in nine cases out of ten, does not fulfil the expectations of the propeller. . . . Next year we may expect to see patent octagonal or parallel-epipedal cricket balls, or some geometrical monstrosity equally inapplicable to the required purposes. . . .' The two types of ball were in use together as late as 1865, when Carlton, in their maiden appearance as a first-class team, were bamboozled by the irregular bounce of the oval ball. They had done all their training with a round ball.

For the clubs which used the oval ball, the rule against lifting or touching except on the first bounce became a farce. Richmond and Melbourne had discarded it by 1861 (it is worth noting that Wills, the Rugby player, had captained each of these sides): 'It was noticed that there were no disputes during the day as the rule which forbids players from touching the ball with the hands except on the first bound, was not enforced, having been found by experience not to conduce to the harmony and pleasure of the game. . . .' The rule was the cause of a great controversy between Melbourne and Geelong in 1862. Melbourne, in a real volte-face, tried to enforce it, and claimed that Geelong did not know the rules; Geelong said that everybody knew Melbourne had discarded the rule after one or

two games, and only revived it when it looked as if they were going to be beaten. Harrison, working for the Customs at the Port of Geelong, and captain of the football team, wrote to the papers: 'How is it that the Melbournites have suddenly become so fond of this old rule of theirs, and really wish to adhere strictly to it in all matches with other clubs this year, that they have not attempted to "practise what they preach" in the scratch games they have already played. I presume it is because the majority of them prefer a manly and pleasant game, and objected to giving players the right to be continually yelling "Hold the ball!" "Stop the game!" "So-and-so touched it while on the second hop and not the first" etc. etc. . . .'

Over the succeeding seasons, carrying the ball continued to be a breach of the rules in theory and a constant feature of the game in practice. The clause about it was 'much infringed' in 1864; 'frequently a player would run twenty yards or more, ball in hand'. In 1865, Clarke of Royal Park, playing against Melbourne, 'caught it under his arm and skedaddled at railway speed for his opponents goal, the only resistance met with being Freeman and Treacy . . . who were of no avail to stop the rush, so Clarke quietly dropped the ball between the posts, and the umpire awarded first goal to Royal Park, amidst tremendous cheering'. Melbourne could not object, as they had been using similar tactics.

Delegates from the leading clubs met before the start of the 1866 season to see if they could come to some sort of an agreement about ball-handling, realizing that this was the crucial issue between the factions which had sprung up. Harrison, a man of great personal force and the game's leading figure, was asked before the meeting to draft a revised set of rules. On 8 May 1866 he was voted to the chair of a meeting at the Freemason's Hotel in Swanston Street. He read his draft, and the rules were approved and accepted unanimously and without alteration by the delegates. They went as follows:

1. The distance between the goals shall not be more than two hundred yards and the width of playing space (to be measured equally on each side of a line drawn through the centre of the goals) not more than one hundred and fifty yards. The goal posts shall be seven yards wide, of unlimited height.
2. The captains on each side shall toss for choice of goal, the side losing the toss, or a goal, has a kick from the centre point between the goals. After a goal is kicked the sides shall change ends.

3. A goal must be kicked fairly between the posts without touching either of them, or any portion of the person of one of the opposite side. In case of the ball being forced (except with the hands or arms) between the goal posts in a scrimmage, a goal shall be awarded.
4. Two posts to be called the kick-off posts shall be erected at a distance of twenty yards each side of the goal posts, and in a straight line with them.
5. In case the ball is kicked behind goal, any one of the side behind whose goal it is kicked may bring it twenty yards in front of any portion of the space between the kick-off posts, and shall kick it towards the opposite goal.
6. Any player catching the ball directly from the foot or leg shall call 'Mark'; he then has a free kick from any spot in line with his mark and the centre of his opponents' goal posts; no player being allowed to come inside the spot marked, or within five yards in any direction.
7. Tripping and hacking are prohibited. Pushing with the hands or body is allowed when any player is in rapid motion. Holding is only allowed while a player has the ball in hand, except in the case provided for in Rule 6.
8. The ball may be taken in hand at any time, but not carried further than it is necessary for a kick, and no player shall run with the ball unless he strikes it against the ground every five or six yards.
9. When a ball goes out of bounds (the same being indicated by a row of posts) it shall be brought back to the point where it crossed the boundary line, and thrown in at right angles to that line.
10. The ball, when in play, may not be thrown.
11. Before the commencement of the match each side shall appoint an umpire, and they shall be the sole judges of goals and breaches of rules. The nearest umpire shall be appealed to in case of dispute.

Rule 8, of course, was the all-important addition. It gave the game the character which had been sought for it during the years of wrangling over ball-handling, and it distinguished it from all other codes. By 1874, when scrimmages were finally abolished, nothing remained of either Soccer or Rugby in the main features of the Australian game.

Tom Wills died at thirty-seven. H. C. A. Harrison survived him by more than fifty years. He captained Melbourne and

Richmond and Geelong during his career, and over the same years was Victoria's best professional sprint runner.

In Harrison's lifetime, the game went from strength to strength in the southern States, although it never made much of an impact in the north, which was—and still is—Rugby-dominated. By 1880 it had elected a member of parliament in Victoria: 'The member who sat in the last three parliaments for the most important workingman's constituency, owes his seat entirely to his prowess on behalf of the local football club. In no other way was he, or does he pretend to have the slightest qualifications.' It continues to dominate public interest there, drawing more than a hundred thousand spectators a week in Melbourne alone, and its practitioners still scale the heights of public esteem. A couple of years ago, a full-forward missed becoming the mayor of Footscray by a handful of votes, and in the same season a ruckman was photographed in morning dress at Ascot, not far from the Royal Enclosure. Ex-players in droves accede to hotel licences. One of these, recently elevated, drives a substantial Armstrong-Siddeley with the legend 'LOU FOR THE BREW' on the boot. Most radio and television stations guarantee themselves big audiences by using famous footballing names as commentators for League games. (The rewards in this field are rich, both for commentators and for listeners: 'He's running straight for goal—but it's a bastard of a kick. . . .')

The centenary of the game falls halfway through the present season, and the ANFC is to hold a monster carnival on the Melbourne Cricket Ground, which can seat a hundred thousand spectators. The Victorian Football League is anxious to have the game start its second century with a new name, and a naming competition run by a Melbourne newspaper has not long been concluded. The winning entry was, unadventurously, 'Mark'. A New South Welshman suggested 'Windbag', echoing years of derisive comment about Australian Rules from Sydney. This denigration is curious enough, because the game is, in a way, derived from the mother colony. Both Harrison and Wills came overland as children when their parents decided to take up land around Port Phillip. And so it was historical accident that made the-place-for-a-village the home of (as the ANFC blazer bravely has it) 'POPULI LUDUS POPULO'.

A. G. Daws

GMH SCHOLARSHIP PLAN...

helping to meet a national need!

AUSTRALIA NEEDS more scientists and more people trained in advanced technology. Science today is playing an increasingly important role in our lives and in our national development. So it is vital that men and women be found with the ability to devote themselves to research and the pursuit of greater knowledge. Recognising this need, General Motors-Holden's announced the GMH Research Fellowship plan which offers 25 Post-Graduate Fellowships at Australian universities. The successful applicants, selected by the universities and Vice Chancellors' committee, are engaged in research work in varied fields that could be of great national value.

The total cost of the GMH Research Fellowships is about £37,500 a year and the value of each fellowship ranges from £800 to £1,200 annually.

Within its own plants, GMH is continuing to strengthen the various training programmes. So far 35 young employees have been awarded Scholarships under which they will have two years graduate training in the United States of America. Training takes place at the General Motors Institute at Flint, Michigan and at various other General Motors plants.

GMH also has several other training schemes including an apprenticeship training plan. All this training is helping to increase the number of highly qualified people in this country — people who can help GMH implement their policy of building more and better things for more people, everywhere.

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Q199

Play it Safe, or Play it Risky?

"Live Dangerously!" is a credo with manifold merits we often hear extolled. But is it for everybody? Or is it only for those with the special talents of mind and character which enable them to "get away" with it? Its advocates remind us, again, that "Fortune favours the brave". But we do well not to forget that Fortune is also most fickle.

All experience shows that steady progress and prosperity come most surely to those who have security and stability — to those who choose "Play it safe" most often and "Play it risky" but rarely.

Australia's national progress and prosperity, which have burgeoned mightily in recent years, were built largely by agriculturists, industrialists and economists who were men of vision, purposeful planners, who strove always for stability and the solid gains of steady growth. The fruits of their labours are the envy of many less fortunate peoples of the world.

The Atlantic organisation, which has for thirty years served the nation's builders in the fields of transportation, industry and agriculture, with the very best in petroleum products which scientists and refiners could produce, is proud to have had a share in this past growth. And Atlantic pledges itself to continuance of effective service to those constructive people who will play it solid and play it safe in the even greater national development which the future so clearly holds.



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MELBA'S HUSBAND

H. A. Lindsay

WHO WAS Australia's best-known man is a matter of opinion. Several statesmen, a few scientists and scholars, with quite a number of sportsmen, could be nominated. The bushranger Ned Kelly would be well in the running. But in the case of Australian women, none can come within coo-ee of Dame Nellie Melba. In her day she was world-famous.

Not even the Anzacs at Gallipoli, or our first cricket team to visit England, there to hit the best bowlers for six and dismiss the great Dr W. G. Grace for a duck, did more to put Australia on the map than this Melbourne-born singer.

A great deal about Melba's career can be found in print. She wrote her reminiscences under the title *Melodies and Memories*. Two biographies have been published. Beverley Nichols, who had been her publicity agent, used a cruelly revealing caricature of her in his novel *Evensong*. A radio serial was based on her life.

But in anything written by, or about, Melba, only passing references are made to the man whom she married. The impression given is that he was a worthless type; the unfortunate affair was best forgotten.

Actually, he was the injured party. He never accepted a penny from her, he suffered in silence, and that most unsuccessful marriage wrecked his life.

If a man achieves fame, his wife shares it. When he is knighted or raised to the peerage, she automatically acquires a title. If he becomes wealthy, she usually spends far more money than does her husband. But—a fact conveniently overlooked by feminists—it doesn't work in reverse. The husband of the famous woman does not bask in reflected glory. On the contrary, his position can be very humiliating.

Most unfortunate of all is the man whose wife achieves stage fame *after* marriage. He can trail around after her, in which case he suffers the stigma of 'living on what his wife earns' or he may see her only when her travels bring her within reach. Divorce court statistics, however, reveal that in the majority of cases the star dumps the now unwanted husband at the first opportunity.

These facts must be kept in mind if one is to understand what happened to Charles Nesbitt Frederick Armstrong, youngest son of Sir Andrew Armstrong, an Irish baronet, after he had

married Nellie Mitchell, later to achieve fame as the great opera star Dame Nellie Melba.

Over seventy-five years ago, 'Kangaroo Charley' Armstrong came to Australia and secured a position of overseer on a big sugar-cane farm at Mackay, Queensland. At Christmas, 1881, he went to Brisbane for a holiday and there he met David Mitchell, a Melbourne brickmaker, and his twenty-two year old daughter Nellie, who had been very depressed since the deaths of her mother and young sister.

Nellie Mitchell fell for the tall, handsome young Irishman. They were married within a few weeks and Charles took her to live in a cottage on the cane farm. He soon found that he had caged the proverbial eagle. Left alone in the house all day, Nellie passed the time in brooding. Her discontent was increased by the humidity of the wet season and the monotonous roar of the rain on the iron roof.

Some neighbouring cane-farmers have placed on record a picture of this ill-fated marriage. She accused her husband of robbing her of her chance of a career. She complained of the clammy wet-season heat, the spiders which invaded their bedroom, the leeches in the garden. Charles took it all.

Ten months after the wedding, their son George was born. Two months later she left for Melbourne, her declared intention being to show her father his first grandson. Charles was liberal with the money to pay for what he thought was a holiday, but Nellie had already made up her mind not to return.

Charles Armstrong had been very much in love with his wife. According to his friends at Mackay, for two years he refused to believe that she had decided on a permanent separation. When he realized the truth at last, he changed from a happy, cheerful young man to a silent misogamist.

In the meantime, Nellie Armstrong was carrying out her plans for a career as a singer. Her first real break came in May, 1884. A concert was held in Melbourne Town Hall, the proceeds to go to Herr Elsasser, who had conducted the Liedertafel for many years. A leading critic wrote: 'This concert will never be forgotten on account of the delightful surprise afforded by Mrs Armstrong's singing.' The rest is stage history.

In his biography of Melba, Percy Colson mentions her 'undesirable husband' and states that he made a terrible scene when he called on her at a Brussels hotel a few years later. He goes so far as to say: 'She probably made him an allowance on condition that he left her in peace.' Colson caps it by stating that Melba finally divorced her husband 'for desertion'.

The facts are very different. Charles followed his wife to Europe with two objects in mind. One was a last attempt at a reconciliation. The other was to see his son and to satisfy himself that the boy was not suffering on account of the parental separation. Melba gave him a frigid reception. She made it plain that, now she was on the way to stardom, her husband was 'not wanted on the voyage'. She said she was not neglecting the boy.

Charles never saw her again, except for a brief interview years later. He allowed Melba to claim that the marriage had been a deplorable mistake on her part. The legend grew that her husband had treated her very badly. It persists to this day.

But Charles was not satisfied with the arrangements made for the care of George. When the child was eight years of age, Charles divorced Melba with as little publicity as possible. Being the injured party—he had no trouble in proving to the court that his wife had deserted *him*—he was granted custody of the child. He took the boy to Texas, USA.

He appears to have forwarded information about George through a third party, for as soon as Melba heard of the great Texas storm of 1900, she was able to contact her ex-husband and receive an assurance that her son had not been injured.

In 1900 Charles Armstrong went to Klamath County, Oregon, accompanied by George, now a young man. The taciturn Charles divulged nothing of his past, except to state that he had lost nearly everything he possessed in the great hurricane which had wiped out the city of Galveston, Texas.

Klamath County was then one of America's last frontiers. Stage coaches still ran there. Charles bought a small ranch from a man named Applegate and settled down to the life of a farmer. Local gossips speculated about the silent, brooding rancher who had the name Nellie tattooed on his left forearm, but only one person ever gained his confidence—Alice Applegate, daughter of the man from whom he had bought the land. She divulged nothing while Charles was alive.

But George did reveal a few facts. 'My mother's Madame Melba, the great singer,' he told the wife of a neighbour. To a friend of his own age he disclosed that his paternal grandfather was Sir Andrew Armstrong. These items of information were soon known, but Charles rebuffed all attempts to learn more.

His family in Ireland gave him no sympathy. Melba had been invited to visit them after she had won fame and her personal charm won their hearts. In the few letters which Charles had written home, he had never given an explanation of the separation and the divorce, so they believed Melba's story.

'Fancy expecting that wonderful, gifted girl to settle down in the wilds, surrounded by snakes and crocodiles,' said one member of the family. 'No wonder she left him!'

Apparently, it did not occur to them that Nellie's talent had not shown itself at the time of her marriage. Then she had only ambitions. Not until her voice was trained, after she had left her husband, was its quality revealed. There is no evidence that she disclosed how she had refused to again live with Charles.

One day Charles saw a newspaper announcement of a Melba concert in Portland, Oregon. After considering the matter for days, he said abruptly to his son: 'I'm taking you down to let your mother see you.'

At the concert, George listened entranced to the wonderful voice which filled the hall. The tumultuous applause called Melba back again and again. This stately, world-famous woman, glittering with diamonds, was his mother!

But Charles sat through it all with his arms folded and his face set. Nobody knows what sad and bitter memories thronged his mind as he looked at the woman who had been his wife.

Melba didn't know that her former husband and her son were in the audience that night. With his typical consideration, Charles did not send in his card until after the show, thus sparing the great singer from the emotional upset which might have resulted had she known earlier.

Melba received them in her dressing room. What was said may never be known, but it resulted in George staying with his mother. Charles sold his farm and vanished.

Melba lavished affection and money on the son whom she had not seen for fifteen years. In her imperious way, she planned his future. She arranged a marriage with a blue-blooded English girl and dreamed of a career for him, but George was not fitted, either by temperament or upbringing, for the life into which he had been thrust. His first marriage ended in a divorce, he made his own choice of a second wife and found domestic happiness.

When Melba died in 1931, she left her valuable jewellery and most of her considerable fortune to Pamela Armstrong, George's only child.

In 1946, a recluse, aged ninety, died in Victoria, British Columbia. The names upon the death certificate were Charles Nesbitt Frederick Armstrong. To only one person on the west coast of North America did the death notice bring a pang of regret. She was the former Alice Applegate, now Mrs Piel. She broke her long silence by telling a newspaper columnist something of Charles Armstrong's life story.

When published, it created a minor sensation. Had the recluse left any papers or diaries? Nothing was found. Nor would Mrs Alice Applegate Piel say more.

Charles could have earned a great deal of sympathy if he had given his side of the story while Melba was alive. Had he left a statement to be published after his death, it would have scotched the false impressions given by Melba and her biographers. But, being a gentleman by nature as well as by birth, he carried his story with him to the grave, except what he had divulged, under a pledge of secrecy, to Mrs Piel.

Dame Nellie Melba was more than one of the world's greatest stars of opera. She was a wonderful ambassadress for Australia. But she brought a lifetime of sorrow to the Irish gentleman whom she married.

H. A. Lindsay

WATCHING THE SLEEPER

Jessica Aldridge

Every face is the coastline of death, and no more charted
Than those first maps where—north and south unknown
Past the black ridges and the desert stone—
Earth's unimagined continents were parted
By tideless unimaginable seas.

I watch you wondering—Anaximander
Charting the unglobed world. I am as lost
To know what lies beyond the brooding coast,
As helpless my navigating love to wander
Through the indented stillness of your shores.

I would force by this breaking reef of days
Shielding the stubborn silence of death's scarps,
Explore impossibly beyond your lips'
Concealing estuaries of thought, your land-locked bays—
The centuried, sleeping primal memories.

The celled foreshores of time—and inland trace
That terra incognita of closed eyes,
The unimagined continent that lies
Exiled in the enigma of your face.



Fast Loading Won This Revolution!



In any constructional work, speed is the vital factor — speed in digging, building, loading and unloading. From the turn of the century, the change from horse drays to motor tip-trucks has challenged men to find faster ways of filling and emptying them. *Revolutionary* loading methods were essential if economical operation of these vehicles were to be maintained.

A “chinaman” started the development which has resulted in the diesel-powered hydraulic shovels of today: big enough to fill a large tip-truck in a matter of minutes with just a few shovel-fulls.

The “chinaman” was named after the Chinese labourers who were an aftermath of the gold rush. It was a ramp of wooden beams and earth. The “fill” was pushed down this ramp into the waiting dray by a hand-shovel or with a horse-drawn scoop.

In recent times, bulldozers have replaced the old horse, but the big hydraulic shovels are gradually gaining in favour. They quickly lift their loads over the truck's side, making a ramp unnecessary.

Hydraulic power has revolutionized unloading, too. Fifty years ago, many tip-trucks were steam powered and drivers “wound up” their tipper trays with a hand winch. They are now elevated effortlessly in a few seconds. Today, International tip-trucks are still being constantly improved to meet changing needs. They have been designed to conquer the rugged conditions of operation experienced in Australia.

International trucks are now also produced as four-wheel drive models for rugged off-highway work and are manufactured at Dandenong, Victoria.



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NICCOLÒ THE GLASS-SELLER

Desmond O'Grady

NICCOLÒ was one of the best glass-sellers in Naples, taking up his stand each day in the small piazza just by the cathedral San Gennaro and attracting buyers by his pertinent badinage. He looked a lord as he strolled around that piazza, talking with Sergio and Salvatore, the bellringers of the two churches which flanked it, with the shoemaker, the vegetable hawker, the drink-stand man, and with Pietro the other glass-seller.

Sometimes he would stand and watch Pietro trying to sell his glasses but, more often, he liked to show his skill by inveigling people into buying Pietro's wares. He thought that Pietro needed the help.

Those two were different in everything but their trade. Niccolò was swaggering, not tall but well put together and dark, giving the impression of easy strength, about forty, unmarried, enjoying life as it came. Pietro didn't even look like a Neapolitan—slight with reddish hair (hence his nickname Vesuvio) he seemed always to be bearing the weight of the three little Pietros his wife had already borne him.

He was at work early in the morning and was still there with his washing-tub of glasses long after Niccolò had left. And he rarely seemed to enjoy a minute of the long day.

Imagine the surprise, then, when Pietro came late to the piazza one June morning driving a truck rickety and small, true enough, but still a truck. Young and old swarmed shouting while he steered it into his corner of the square. He would not answer their hundred questions, merely saying that the truck was his. With the patience he had so well learned he waited until they should disperse. Niccolò led the banter and congratulations and couldn't resist the opportunity to sell some of Pietro's glasses for him. But he soon stopped himself, saying Pietro must be rich enough already. Pietro was quieter than ever, like a small boy with a crime in hand. He bided his time; when the crowd had drifted off he mounted on the truck's tray where he mysteriously busied himself with long wires, nuts, fittings and screwdrivers for an hour or so.

This then is the scene: the stage opens onto the flux of life, people wandering up and down, cars and occasional buggies, the ratchet roar of Lambrettas and Vespas. The sun's warmth

drenches the piazza now at noon and here the movement is different, languid and relaxed. The setting of the two churches and the palace converted for apartments has not changed for longer than anyone can remember.

Two dozing angels suspended somewhat above the scene are old Sergio and Salvatore, each at the top of the stairs which mount to his church. Their job is to ring the bells at the start of Mass and for the Consecration.

Their perpetual siesta was brutally broken by a booming roar. Sergio looked to the sky for bombers, Salvatore looked up too; he had been awaiting the Judgment. His heart leapt in fear and he jerked on the bell cord, tolling alarm. The voice of Judgment came nearer, it was gruff and wrathful, at last Salvatore recovered sufficiently to distinguish the words: 'sei bicchieri per cento lire'.

The people in the square had stopped at the first onslaught but now they were rushing the truck for a second time. There Pietro stood upright speaking into a metal disc from which his voice issued harsh and magnified. Excited, he repeated his offer without variation: six glasses for one hundred lire. Nobody thought of buying: they were not interested in the content of the message but the form. Pietro had a marvellous toy which brought the great crashing world right into their midst.

Later, though, he did well with this new attraction, selling more glasses than Niccolò, even when the veteran was on the job. To Niccolò's annoyance his racy, salted sales talk was drowned by Pietro's unimaginative spiel. He had pitied Pietro because of his slowness in the give and take of the piazza and had told him he would never make a good seller. He was no better now, but because his voice came through a machine he could dominate the small space. The only subtlety in his appeal was to dramatically drop his prices whenever buyers were attracted by Niccolò.

Now that the people mainly gathered around Pietro talking into the microphone which he had swathed in bandages to refine its harshness, Niccolò had still more opportunity to exercise his wit, and to incite others. He had Anita the shoemaker talking through a cardboard megaphone in competition, but she tired of this quickly. Then he diabolically suggested to Sergio and old Salvatore that they ring their bells to drown out Pietro. But he was stronger and it only sounded as if the Church was celebrating the advent of American capitalism.

At least that's what Niccolò called it. It took him a long time to recognize the devil but one Sunday morning it was

named. That morning Pietro did not appear in the square, Niccolò's supply of glasses flowed away like water, he shouted to Anita and she to Gaetano at his fruit stall how much better it was without the noise of the loudspeaker. About eleven o'clock Niccolò sighted Pietro stealing along the other side of the street. He looked for some moments before he finally recognized him by his walk: it was as if Pietro didn't want you to know he was getting from one place to another, as if he was trying to blend with the wall.

'Look at Pietro,' he called, 'he's dressed like a film star.' He wore a new grey suit with white tie and shoes; Niccolò had not thought such clothes even entered Pietro's dreams.

Pietro had to acknowledge the salutations, so he crossed over. Then they saw, some yards behind him, his family: first there was his eldest boy also dressed in immaculate grey. One of his white-gloved hands held a thick four-foot-tall candle and in the other he carried a regal, creamy lily. It was his first-Communion day. The wife was pale, dressed in black, and about as vivacious as Pietro. Beside her were a younger boy and a little girl, she also in black, with a splendid lace mantilla. Sturdy children with lustrous black eyes and hair, not a bit like Pietro really; Niccolò made some pointed remarks on this when they left for San Gennaro.

Everyone gathered around Pietro but they kept slightly distant from him as if in respect. They longed for him to say something cavalier but he smoothed his lapels with nervous pride and said they were hurrying to the cathedral. To Niccolò's question—had he been there since his first Communion—he answered soberly: yes, last Easter. 'This boy will ride around in a motor car one day,' announced Niccolò, putting his arm around Pietro's son as the family moved off again.

He had sat and thought of his own words then. It was possible, the boy might really have a motor car if Pietro kept on like this, a shiny American car most likely. Where did the money come from? What hope did they have against him? Pietro was a capitalist, an American capitalist. He fixed the words firmly in mind; now he knew what he was fighting.

The next morning Pietro, shabby again, suggested to Niccolò that he could use the loudspeaker at certain times, provided he handed over half the profits. Niccolò was scornful. Did Pietro think he could buy him? Pietro's throat was weak, his voice always hoarse, and that machine would make it ten times worse; he wouldn't last long, besides Niccolò believed that with an effort he could still sell more than Pietro.

He was mistaken. Pietro stayed on, Niccolò sold less and less. He took to guying his rival at his stall: such things as saying 'O Kayee' when a purchase was made, or asking Pietro 'Coca-Cola Joe?' This kept the crowd around Pietro's stand.

Pietro wasn't upset, he hardly seemed to hear. He asked Niccolò to join him, but Niccolò knew he merely wanted to exploit his voice and skill. 'Go away Pietro,' he would say. 'You're wasting both our time.' But when Pietro did go away Niccolò was not so busy. He would leave his wares and mount the steps to chat with either of the bellringers. And then he would enter their dark churches, sit and think. Sometimes, even when the square was busy, he would wander off to San Gennaro and Salvatore would keep his presiding eye on the deserted glasses.

Who can say what went on in San Gennaro? Niccolò used to wander in the cool recesses of the chapels and sit eventually outside that of the saint. Perhaps he expected the saint's blood to liquefy out of season, feeling that it was a period of catastrophes and miracles. Perhaps he expected nothing.

The blast of the hot street would strike him at the door: it was tiresome. Returning he expected comments on his absence, but none came. And that was worse.

The sound of Pietro's voice echoed endlessly around the walls and Niccolò's head but the others said they didn't notice it any more. Hasn't Pietro brought more people to the square they asked, annoyed. So I'm doing all their hearing for them, thought Niccolò.

'If this goes on,' he said, 'I'll be like this': he lurched against a wall contorting his face and twitching his eyes in the way of sham beggars. Then he borrowed a simple pipe and strolling around the square tried to make music. But he had no technique for the second and little spirit for either. Besides there were far too many beggars and musicians already.

Pietro was talking of forming a co-operative. Niccolò was not sure what this meant except that they would all be together, with him outside. One morning he appeared with a tray of plastic toys—whistles, model cars, comical figures, animals, all in the brightest colours. He had invested his small reserve in this venture. 'Why did you buy them,' asked Gaetano amazed, 'you know they're only bought out of charity.'

'Isn't there any for me then,' said Niccolò, who was becoming more and more unreasonable.

Who would want this fragile trash? Men walked around with trays of it but it was only a respectable way of begging. Pietro,

who rarely talked with Niccolò now, came over and wanted to buy some. Niccolò would not sell him any and started to argue wildly, shouting in Pietro's face, 'There was enough bread for the both of us, but now only you eat.'

Which must have been nearly true but still Niccolò was too proud to join with Pietro or the others who were using the microphone occasionally. Each tried to rally his spirits, Anita with woman's wisdom, Gaetano spoke as an equal, Frederico the ice-cream vendor, who had gone with the Americans as far as Cassino during the war, told him how the equipment could easily be destroyed, while Sergio and Salvatore offered him the consolations of philosophy.

He listened but remained crabbed, all his old gusto had gone. They spoke with him yet each of them would use the talking machine; he couldn't get away from it and its message that he was finished. His dark humour lasted a week until one Saturday about five, just as people were filling the piazza, Niccolò rose with his tray and walked over to Pietro's truck. The others watched as Niccolò planked the tray down beside his conqueror: 'Pietro,' he said 'for your son.' Then gravely he shook hands with Anita, Frederico and Gaetano, and mounted the steps to farewell Sergio and Salvatore. They all tried to stop him, Pietro more than anyone. But he completed his finale by swinging his washing tub of glasses onto his shoulder and departing, with sadness on both sides for he had been the life of the piazza.

So he walked away. Not a fading-dusk picture because it was only five o'clock with the sun almost at full strength. Nor a heading for better things either because every other pitch in Naples would have its own seller. When he woke in the morning he would still have the tub, the glasses and little else except a slight hunger and an empty day ahead. But he could not just lie there, he would have to do something.

He was next seen at Pompeii, trying to sell tourists glasses from the ruins, full of the historic dust. But they looked just like ordinary kitchen glasses to all but the most credulous.

After Pompeii? Perhaps he was able to go north. One should not dwell too much on Niccolò's little troubles. It's not as if he didn't have companions. Why, annually, seventy thousand southerners move north seeking work and many settle in that fabulous city, Rome. Yet tourists from all over the world save for years to make a brief trip to the same city. Though not quite the same city. Don't worry, these southerners don't spoil the tourist's Rome. And, what is more, Naples remains just as colourful as ever.

Desmond O'Grady



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LETTER FROM AMERICA

MONOPOLIZING AMERICAN ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Russell Kirk

NEARLY everyone in the United States is in favour of academic freedom—in the abstract. But the tendency of democracies to enforce virtual unanimity of opinion, at every level of society, which Tocqueville remarked upon, continues to operate, in America as elsewhere. For a great many people nowadays, therefore, 'academic freedom' means perfect freedom to agree with *their* opinions. And, odd though it may seem on first reflection, just now this tendency is strongest among American latter-day liberals. A number of these gentlemen are in the habit of protesting vehemently against violations of academic freedom—so long as the alleged violation is inflicted upon a latter-day liberal. But if the unfortunate is a conservative, or an old-fangled liberal, or even an anti-Communist Marxist—why, what do deviationists like that need freedom for?

Here is a severe, but not astounding, instance. Dr Sidney Hook, the well-known professor of philosophy at New York University, is a forthright Marxian socialist, and has long been associated with 'liberal' and 'progressive' movements in America. But Professor Hook also happens to be a courageous anti-Communist, and is opposed, with a very few exceptions, to the toleration of Communists on American campuses: not because he disagrees with them, but because they are conspiratorial agents, who discredit the Academy and deliberately violate professional ethics. Now about a year ago, some scholars at a famous Middlewestern university suggested it might be well to invite Dr Hook to speak there. The dean of faculty, however, promptly vetoed that suggestion. 'What!' cried the dean. 'Hook, that Fascist reactionary? Why, he's against academic freedom.' The dean was all in favour of academic freedom—that is, freedom for leftward-verging liberals who did not deviate from his private convictions. (His ban extends not simply to Dr Hook, by the way, but to all known conservative speakers.) The dean is not a Communist; but he thinks there are no real enemies to the Left, and that any heretic who suggests so much ought to be anathema.

According to *Newsweek* magazine, the present writer is the 'conservative *par excellence*'; though other persons, I am told,

have employed different adjectives. An American university instructor, visiting London recently, was holding forth at a private party on the dread evils of conformism in America, McCarthyism, and all that; his country, he said, lay under a Reign of Terror. Another American present suggested that there were some original voices speaking up, nevertheless: 'Russell Kirk, for instance.' The liberal instructor turned white with fury. 'Kirk? Kirk? He's a s—! He's a s—!' The interruption so distressed him, indeed—though he never had beheld your servant—that he soon departed for his hotel. Toleration, thou art a jewel.

According to the poet and scholar Ludwig Lewisohn, it is the 'conservative professor and student, the religious professor and student' who are a forlorn and persecuted remnant in American universities and colleges today. A contributor to the weekly *New Republic*, himself an instructor in California, recently wrote that *some* conservatives are tolerated on American campuses—so long as they are quiet, and don't vex faculty meetings with their opinions. These gentlemen, the writer observed, are the Uncle Toms of Academe; they content themselves with saying that 'they're not ashamed of being black.'

Professor Ralph Gilbert Ross, a frequent contributor to *Partisan Review* and other 'advanced' journals, and profoundly hostile himself toward conservatives, has grown somewhat disquieted by the intolerance of certain of his colleagues at the University of Minnesota. Writing in *Commentary*, he says that a faculty committee (of which he was a member) recently refused to promote a professor on the ground that he had once said something in favour of Senator McCarthy. Mr Ross himself is no admirer of the late Joseph McCarthy, of course; and he adds, uneasily, that perhaps this discrimination may be justified by the argument that anyone who sympathized with Senator McCarthy was stupid, and therefore unworthy of promotion. But the episode affected him disagreeably. It well might. When disagreement on current politics is made the index of stupidity not much scope remains for academic freedom.

A professor of history at the University of California has called the long-established—and still prevailing—doctrinaire liberal hegemony on most campuses 'the liberal terror'. So far as I know, he has not gone so far as to put this into print—or if he has, no academic journal has published his declaration. Nor are the terrorists of doctrinaire liberalism simply the partisans of latter-day, or 'collectivistic', liberalism: too many old-fangled Benthamite or Manchesterian liberals are similarly

intolerant of that dread word 'conservative'; they prefer socialists to conservatives, indeed. The president of one of the two or three best universities in America, not long ago, was under the necessity of finding someone to fill an endowed chair of American institutions. He had in mind a well-known conservative scholar; and, aware that there would be ideological opposition from the campus Left, sought support for his recommendation in other quarters. He approached a professor of economics, committed to purest Bentham, a hot hater of collectivism. But the president was rebuffed. 'That fellow!' said the old-fangled liberal. 'He's a damned *conservative*! I'd get up a public protest against his appointment.' What with these difficulties, the chair in question remains empty. The twentieth-century liberal often is ready to defend to the death his own monopoly of the classroom. At the same time, he thinks Voltaire was a great fellow.

This discrimination is not purely political; it extends to questions of religious belief. The established liberal orthodoxy is quite as intolerant of religious conviction, more often than not, as the medieval Church was intolerant of heresy. The Catholic scholar, naturally, is the liberal's greatest bugaboo, but in diminished degree this hostility extends to every variety of Christianity, accepting—and then grudgingly—only the more enthusiastic social gospellers. A liberal of this stamp frequently equates Communism and Catholicism as 'totalitarian movements', arguing that the Catholic scholar ought not to be admitted to the Academy because he is 'committed to dogmas', and is 'not his own master', and is 'not free to pursue the truth wherever it may lead'. (All truth, you know, leads to secularized liberalism.) A priest in Detroit, for instance, though attached to a municipal university, was rebuffed by a professor of sociology, who refused even to argue with him in print, 'because Father M— lacks the necessary scholarly disciplines'. The fact that the priest happened also to be a doctor of philosophy of a secular university was brushed aside as irrelevant: every priest, the implication ran, is by necessity an ignorant obscurant.

And this discrimination also is sectional, or regional, in character. The seaboard states of the Northeast, in the view of orthodox liberalism, are the repository of learning and enlightenment; while the wicked South is the pit of darkest ignorance and reaction. If the doctrinaire liberal never has been south of Mason's and Dixon's line, his righteous prejudice is so much the stronger. He doesn't need to *see* the South; to go there would turn his stomach, he knows. He has read about

the South in Erskine Caldwell's novels, and seen it depicted on Broadway; and that's evidence enough for any pragmatic liberal. If someone interjects that by far the most flourishing school of American writers today is Southern—why, the impertinent heretic must be a Fascist and a racist. An English friend of mine, new to this country, suggested to Northern liberal acquaintances that he might enrol at Duke University, in North Carolina. 'What!' murmured they, scandalized. 'Duke? That's a *Southern* university.' Such contempt extends, though not so strongly, to the Middlewest. The Middlewestern states, any well-disciplined Eastern liberal knows, are the Bible Belt, the abode of Joseph McCarthy and his enthusiasts (actually, Senator McCarthy had more support in New York and Boston than in Chicago and Minneapolis), and a cultural wasteland. Even scholars of outwardly tolerable views, if they come from this desolation, are suspect as inwardly corrupted by prairie bigotry, until they have demonstrated otherwise.

But above and beyond politics and religion and region, the all-embracing conformity exacted by the 'ritualistic liberals' is conformity to the doctrine of 'non-commitment'. A scholar, these gentlemen argue, ought to be committed to no firm point of view about anything. He ought to pursue Truth, but he ought never to embrace her. His mind, like that of Locke's infant, should be a *tabula rasa*, so far as any first principles are concerned. He ought to doubt all things, for the sake of doubting; he ought to break down old prejudices in his students' minds. Liberalism means a word beloved among the ritualistic liberals, 'ambivalence'. Nothing is settled, nor ought to be; the function of the university is to 'destroy all barriers to the questing spirit of man'. At Michigan State University, certain professors of education, sociology, and psychology—dedicated liberals all—once drew up an elaborate set of tests to be given to all entering freshman and all graduating seniors, to determine 'value-preferences' and 'environmental prejudices', and how efficaciously the university does its good work of eradicating stubborn convictions acquired from tradition and family instruction. One question asked, in substance, was whether the student believed 'that it is wrong for a brother to have sexual relations with his sister'. The bigoted student who replied 'yes' obviously was the victim of irrational prejudices. Not that the liberal professors were in favour of incest on principle; they were in favour of nothing on principle; they simply aspired to 'give the student an open mind' and 'set free the inquiring rationality'. They were tremendously chagrined when the results of their tests

revealed that graduating seniors left the university with the very prejudices they had entertained as entering freshmen: the university had failed in its mission.

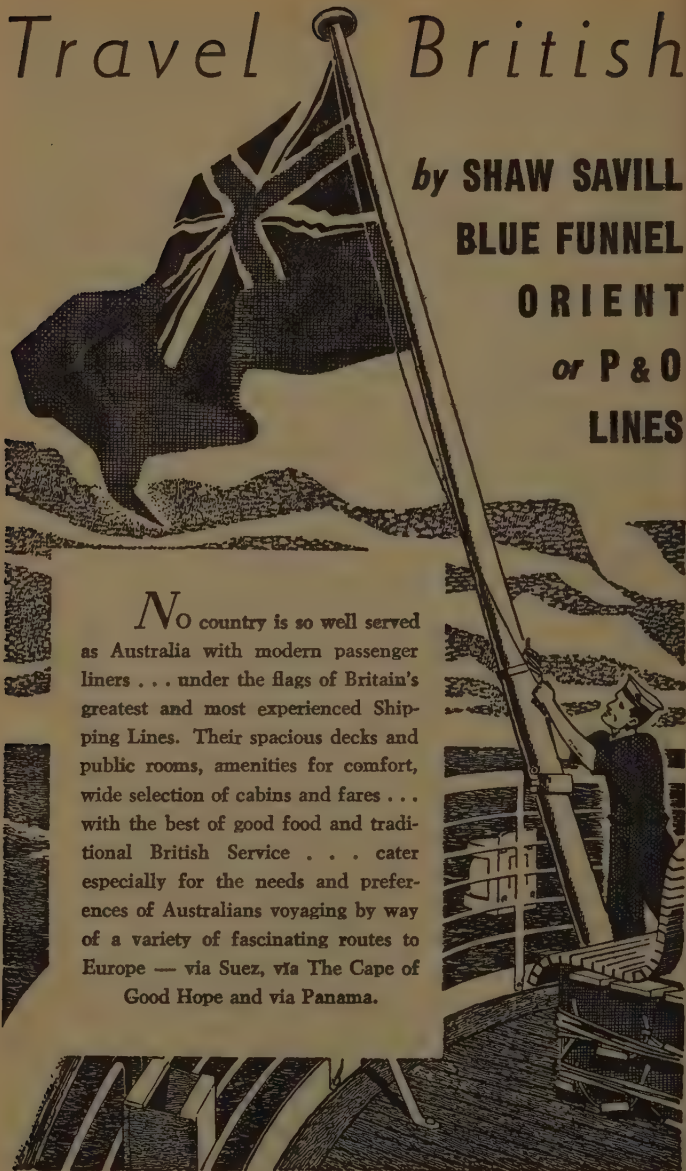
Whether the liberal professors really act upon this absolute relativism is another matter. Some years ago, a body of these gentlemen at Ohio State University proposed that all members of the faculty be required to subscribe to an oath declaring that they would teach only 'by the empirical method'. This, it turned out, meant the pragmatic—and the egalitarian social—principles of John Dewey. The proposal was defeated only after hot debate. Relativism and ambivalence have their own test-acts. In politics, the ritualistic liberals affirm, a scholar ought to have no commitments—except, naturally, to democracy and liberalism. Strong affirmation of faith in democracy and liberalism isn't commitment; it's merely The Truth. And who defines democracy and liberalism? Why, a faculty committee of latter-day liberals. Who else could? At one great university, a conservative scholar recently was proposed for an appointment. No, never, said the doctrinaire liberals: he's committed to a Point of View. They wouldn't for the world think of depriving him of his right to express that Point of View—except at their university. Some brave soul suggested, at this moment, that the faculty already included several eminent men of the Left, especially an Advanced Thinker whom (according to his own declaration) President Franklin Roosevelt had distrusted as a totalitarian. 'Nonsense!' said the majority; commitment in *that* direction—well, it's harmless, anyway.

This liberal intolerance very frequently is strongest at the famous old universities and colleges; while the more innovating and nominally radical institutions, like the *avant-garde* New School for Social Research, in New York, nowadays tolerate, and even encourage, the presence of conservatives and other deviationists from liberal orthodoxy. But a close analysis of this phenomenon would require another essay; and the causes of liberal intolerance in America, and its possible cures, deserve a book. Here I merely set down some fragmentary evidence of the malady. The prevailing climate of opinion on the American campus remains—though weakened—an egalitarian and quasi-collectivistic liberalism, at least among the faculty politicians and those energetic persons who push themselves to the headships of committees. And it is a wondrously illiberal liberalism. Yet it will not endure forever; prevailing opinions, Disraeli said, generally are the opinions of the generation that is passing.

Russell Kirk

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KRISHNA MENON

A PASSAGE TO ENGLAND

Peter Hastings

‘IF YOU really want to know what goes on in the UN you’ll simply have to meet Krishna,’ said my Canadian friend. ‘He likes Commonwealth correspondents so I’ll arrange a meeting.’ He did, and at noon on the appointed day we sat in the rather formidable atmosphere of the Delegates’ Lounge sipping scotch on the rocks, chatting idly and waiting. A few minutes after twelve, flanked by some of his staff, Mr Menon came slowly down the huge room. His bushy, grey hair was neatly brushed back and a well tailored English suit filled out his thin, tall figure. There was a little of the Royal Progress about his deliberate movements and his flashing smile to friends and acquaintances. He seemed to limp slightly (later I learned more about that celebrated limp) and he used his cane very gracefully. Indeed the whole effect was one of considerable prestige and elegance, an impression heightened at closer range by his aquiline good looks and curious yellow-tinged eyes which in conversation rose and set like twin suns.

The time I write of was in 1953 when Krishna Menon had arrived, an international star whose statements and actions were bigger news than those of Vishinsky or Gladwyn Jebb or the other performers on the East River. He was making the most of it and hitting the headlines daily with his busy promotion of his own version of a Korean peace conference and his even busier promotion of India as a member of it.

We were introduced. He was very courteous but refused to sit down or take a cup of tea. He was too busy, he said, there were too many things to be done in the cause of peace. Peace was a word I was to hear on his lips, on the lips of every Indian in the UN, with monotonous frequency.

We talked of India’s hopes for a conference and a settlement, whether the Commonwealth nations would support India’s bid for a seat, whether US opposition to India’s participation might relent, whether the conference should be ‘across the table’ (‘In other words,’ said Menon moodily, ‘pistols for two and coffee for one’) or ‘around the table’. I don’t suppose there was a single bit of the sort of political phrase-making current at the time that did not enter into the conversation. None of

his answers could be pinned down. They were all evasive, or worse, ambiguous. My Canadian friend was silently enjoying himself and I realized that I had had a lesson on two levels. Half an hour was nearly up and I knew Menon must move on although he still stood in a graceful Regency attitude, one hand resting lightly on the head of his cane, appearing the very embodiment of a willing source of priceless information. But I had got nowhere and time was up. 'Well, Mr Menon, do you think there will be a peace conference of *any* sort?' I asked finally. His yellow eyes bored into mine. 'Ah,' he said, 'to have a conference one must be conference-minded.' This was calculated doubletalk and he turned to go, delivering the *coup de grâce*. 'There are some countries,' he added with his charming smile, 'which do not want a conference.' This was a thrust at Sir Percy Spender's personal antipathy to Krishna and to the idea of Indian participation in any conference. He turned away with polite assurances that at any time I wanted to see him he would only be too glad to do what he could and stalked off down the lounge to join Selwyn Lloyd. As he made his way there were no toothy smiles, no waves of the hand. He seemed irritable, preoccupied with an almost insupportable burden. In its theatrical way it was a very impressive exit.

I saw a lot of Vengalil Krishnan Krishna Menon in that period as I watched him in session, or on TV programmes, or saw him around the halls and entrances of the UN building. He was much better entertainment than Vishinsky had ever been. Menon's was a compelling, tremendous personality. There were so many sides to him, so many contradictions. There were his sudden bursts of humour, his scowling glooms, his petulance, his unashamed limelighting. There was his functional limp as he strode dramatically from the podium like a Hindu holy man forever disgusted with Western materialism and his bland shrug when shown a London newspaper picture of himself energetically sprinting third in a hundred-yards dash at an Indian rally in London only a few months before. There was his eager, roving eye for Lloyd and other British bigwigs, his insatiable tea drinking, his ascetic horror of tobacco and liquor, his keen eye for a good-looking woman, his open contempt for Mme Pandit and his dramatic appearances on TV panels . . . admonitory forefinger raised to a frightened woman interviewer, the precise, English-tinged voice, the best Harold Laski manner: 'My dear young lady, I am not here to argue. You Americans want everything cut and dried. You should learn to live and let live. That is the road to peace. . . .'

Krishna was a ham, a good one, and a brilliant and formidable debater whose principal theme was anti-Westernism. Attack, attack, attack in the name of peace. South Africa must be brought to book over its race policies in the interests of peace. Red China's actions in Korea must be understood in the light of peace. The West must renounce its provocative imperialist adventures for the sake of peace. There seemed no end to it and nothing in it to be reconciled with reason; for his was an upside-down world where black was white, and white, black.

Menon, one might tell oneself, knew better. Hadn't he been 'educated' in England? Hadn't he been a wartime councillor of the badly bombed St Pancras Borough? Hadn't he told one, with a flash of that overwhelming smile, that in 'England they do not put you in prison for disagreeing with them and that is why in England people are free'? But, no, the doubletalk and double standards seemed interminable. There was nothing to show that Red China wasn't peacefully inclined; the Tibet and Korean interventions were quite logical, justifiable results of an internal revolution which Ambassador Panikkar had correctly judged 'agrarian'. Nothing to fear there. What was all this pother that the Americans kept raising about slave labour behind the Iron Curtain? The British had done as bad or worse in India. Communist charges of Allied atrocities in North Korea and of Allied use of germ warfare? 'It is not for me to deny these charges,' he said suavely. The French action in Indo-China? 'Imperialist.' And Ho Chi-minh? Discreet silence. NATO and SEATO? 'Organizations of imperialist powers.' And the Warsaw Pact? Again, silence. Later, Krishna was to play a role of excruciating equivocation in the Suez-Hungary crises. It should not be forgotten, at this date, how deeply shocked India and other Asian nations were over the Anglo-French action in Suez. It could be said that they lost all sense of proportion over it. Nehru denounced the action in the bitterest of terms while defending Russia's actions in Hungary—about the true nature and implications of which he could hardly have been in doubt or not for very long—as mere 'internal conflict', and 'internal matter' and 'confusing'.

From the United Nations Krishna piously echoed these sentiments and played his usual equivocal role. While thundering about French and British perfidy he busily sought to take the pressure off the Russians. Thus, in the course of a speech about Hungary in November 1956, he loftily declared that India was against intervention of any kind from any source. India was glad, he said, to hear that Russian troops were being withdrawn

and the sooner the better. As the purposes of Russian intervention had by then been achieved Krishna's speech was as meaningless as his call for a 'settlement' in Hungary. Everything had already been settled by Soviet tanks. While Menon goaded the British, particularly with his official attacks, he infuriated them with some of his indiscreet private utterances to fellow delegates and journalists around the UN building.

His venomous feeling towards the British reached such proportions that he said unwarily to a fellow delegate: 'All this fuss which is being raised over Hungary is merely to divert attention from Suez.' On another occasion he allegedly went the whole hog and said bitterly: 'You know, the Russians ought to bomb London.' Both of these statements appeared in print in due course and brought denials from official Indian sources in New York. But Krishna's notorious flair for indiscretion, mostly spontaneous, occasionally calculated, was too well known for the denials to appear very convincing. It was a curious fact that Krishna never himself denied evidence of the many indiscretions into which he was led by his own loquacity. He always left it for someone else to do.

Equivocation seemed to be the keynote of nearly all the Indians at the UN and almost a required qualification among those who had been handpicked by Menon for future promotion. I remember in this instance young Lal who was a third secretary in Indian External Affairs. Lal was not his name and he was a tall, handsome, charming youth with a most engaging manner. But beneath it, and the English university education which he carried with deceptive self-assurance, was nationalism, suspicion, and hostility to the West which he invariably rationalized as opposition to Western materialism. He could carry this to absurd lengths and attack America as a country solely devoted to plumbing. I remember his discomfiture when an American friend asked him if he lived in a cold-water flat. He, too, had the admonitory finger down to a fine art, the hectoring, bantering manner. Although he had lived in the West and worked there and had many friends there, he hated it. Somewhere, he must have felt sure, was evidence of vast conspiracy which would prove the West to be the corrupt, materialist society he felt it ought to be. On one occasion he was quite sure he had found it. We arrived together at a mutual friend's place for a cocktail party at which most of the guests were British Commonwealth UN people. Shortly after we arrived somebody came in with the news that Mrs Petrov had decided to stay in Australia. Lal's eyes flashed and he flushed with anger. 'Really,' he said

in a loud voice for everyone to hear, 'You Australian are worse than the Russians you are always condemning.' It was quite clear to him then and there that Mrs Petrov was the victim of a reactionary Western plot. All our talk about the absence of coercion in the West was mere claptrap. He knew! This was the Menon pattern without the energy, the brilliance, the brooding intensity.

You could never pin him down. If you threatened his position by logical argument he would slide away into generalities or take refuge in banter. One always finished talking to him with the feeling that perhaps you and he had not been talking about the same subject. It was the same with Krishna. I spoke to him a number of times during the 1953 session, sometimes only very briefly. He was once or twice rude in a calculated way but mostly very polite, indicating with a courtly nod of the head that he was quite willing to discuss any issue I brought up. But somehow the issues never got discussed and I was left with clever propaganda items which seemed to boil down to two themes: the West was out of step, and India had a world monopoly on wisdom and peaceful intentions. But there were certain things about this strange man with the cane who spoke only very poor Hindi and had, it was said, forgotten his native Malayalam tongue altogether, that were beginning to interest me. One of them was the marked contrast between his private attitude to the British which seemed warm and friendly on the surface and his public attitude which was to tear into them and their policies. In conversation one day the subject of Britain and its future came up. 'Its days as a world power are over,' he said, 'and that is a good thing. Britain will become a third rate power like Sweden, a force for peace, it is inevitable and desirable.' It was a strange and irrational thing to say. It was also shockingly indiscreet for a world figure. And it voiced a peculiar wish for a man who had told me the English were one of the only free peoples. But at least, I felt, here was a clue to that ambivalence which stretches back into Menon's past.

Krishna Menon was born sixty years ago in Calicut, Malabar, southern India. His father was a successful lawyer who claimed princely descent but it was not a vastly exciting pretension for Malabar society is matriarchal and the males in the family do not count for much. It was the ambition of many of Krishna's young men friends to escape the hordes of female relatives that dominated all family activities and to escape, if only for a while, the incessant chatter of female voices. Menon succeeded in this but most of his male contemporaries remained to be kept

and bullied by armies of sisters, cousins, aunts and grandmothers. It is significant that Menon has never married although it is said he was at one time very much in love with an Irish-woman. In his late 'teens Menon met Mrs Annie Besant, that peculiar English lady who had adopted India as her home and whose strong personality, political and religious beliefs so profoundly influenced many Indians of Menon's generation.

Young Indian intellectuals flocked to her picnics and her discussion groups where she dispensed a heady mixture of tea and sympathy, Theosophy and Fabianism, in equal parts. She struck a chord of nationalism and they answered it with one voice. She offered a vision of a new India which was theirs if they went about it the right way. The right way proved to be the Home Rule for India League of which she became president in the ticklish first world war years. Menon became one of her most articulate disciples, lecturing at her request and helping her edit her newspaper. When he was disowned by his family for his political activities it was she who helped him out with small loans of money and who eventually—fateful event—paid his passage to England where he arrived in 1924, broke and jobless.

For a while he kept himself by teaching and eked out an uncomfortable living by contributing articles to left-wing and socialist periodicals. He also set himself determinedly to the matter of his own education, pursuing degrees with that fanatical single-mindedness that perhaps only an Indian can muster. He ultimately took an M.Sc. in political science at the London School of Economics under the late Harold Laski whom he described to me as 'one of the greatest men the world has known and a hundred years ahead of his time'. He was admitted as a barrister to the Inner Temple but few briefs came his way.

He lived throughout these years in a shabby furnished room in Camden Town where he half starved on tinned soup and tea, water for which, recall his acquaintances of those years, was always boiling on a dirty gas ring. He was immensely active in India League politics, addressing half-empty halls, persuading Labour MP's to join the ranks and orating in Hyde Park where his unkempt hair, frayed suits and prophetic eyes made him a familiar sight. In the early thirties he became secretary of the League and could boast nearly one hundred Labour MP's as members—some of them influential figures. But his line became increasingly Marxist and many of his friends in the Labour Party, of which Krishna was a member, began to have their doubts. In 1935 Menon met the man who was to have a

profounder influence on his life and his career than either Mrs Besant or Harold Laski. Nehru had come to England looking for a publisher for his autobiography. They were immediately attracted to each other, the scholarly, self-contained nobleman from Kashmir and the self-exiled agitator.

They found that they had much in common, apart from the respectable ambition to see India a self-governing country. Nehru had also been influenced by the teachings of Mrs Besant which he had received through a stimulating Irish tutor. They both believed that socialism was a political end good in itself and the only answer to fascism. Through Menon, Nehru met Cripps, Laski and other big figures in the Labour Party as well as publishers and intellectuals interested in the Indian question. They parted after a brief trip to civil-war Spain. Menon returned to London and agitation. Nehru returned to India and imprisonment. In the late thirties Menon became prospective MP for the Scottish industrial constituency of Dundee. His chances were considered good but he was losing support in the Labour Party because of his admission of Communists to the India League executive and his support of *front populaire* tactics. When the war came bringing with it a united political front in England, Menon antagonized numbers of his most influential supporters by characterizing it in Communist terms as an imperialist struggle. He kept up his torrent of articles and lectures unimpeded by the Government and it is this, more than any other event, that he holds eternally in Britain's favour. When Hitler invaded Russia both Menon and Nehru paused briefly and changed their tune slightly. This looked serious and had nothing to do with imperialism. India, they decided, would now help in the common struggle if granted her independence. When Britain refused to pursue this course which Churchill described as 'madness' Menon and Nehru returned to their agitating. It was at this period that Menon was a councillor of the St Pancras Borough which had been badly bombed.

But now, it was only a matter of time. A new climate of opinion was rapidly setting in bringing with it opportunities of a magnitude that even Menon's acute opportunist genius could not have envisaged. At war's end the Labour Party was committed to Indian independence and Nehru was forming an interim government with speed and skill. He needed above all else a personal representative for talks in London, in the United Nations and in the chancelleries of the world. Who else but Menon? In a short leap Krishna Menon was in the big time of chauffeured cars and coded cables. And he was

ready. He started to wear good suits, to brush his hair back and to use his cane more as a walking stick and less as a club. He went to the United Nations as alternate Indian delegate and from there to the highly sensitive post of High Commissioner in London where he continued to live in Camden Town, using India House as an office where he spent an average eighteen hours day and where he occasionally slept beside his work. He had power, prestige and the reputation of a powerful personality and he used all three indefatigably despite grumblings from New Delhi's Auditor-General (who was probably still under the illusion that this was not the way to run the ICS) about Krishna's high expenditures on entertainments and unwarranted disbursements of India Government monies. At this time India House's staff shot up to two thousand bodies.

It is said that Cabinet grumblings over Krishna's behaviour in London caused Nehru to send him to the United Nations as deputy to Mme Pandit—Chairman of the Indian Delegation to the UN—in 1952. It was an uneasy arrangement for both were egotistical, vain and ambitious. Menon treated her with polite contempt even though she was *Panditji's* sister, a fact he greatly resented.

It was commonly alleged at the time that Menon refused to show her the cables he was sending back to New Delhi and that when she complained of her deputy's high-handed behaviour to her brother, Nehru refused to answer. At all events whether he did or not it made no difference to his continued high regard for Menon and it seemed too much of a coincidence that Mme Pandit was removed to the less frictional air of Washington as Ambassador and then later again to London where she is now High Commissioner.

The 11th Assembly, in 1956-57, was the last Krishna was to attend before he became Defence Minister which portfolio now places him close to Nehru where he likes to be. It was, from all reports, by far and away Menon's show which he stole for the usual reasons—his brilliance, his tortuous intelligence and his fascinating self-infatuation. 'What is that you have there?' apprehensively asked Sweden's pleasant Gunnar Jarring, Security Council President, 'Is it a book?' 'Several books,' snapped Krishna as he stood to harangue to death a Western proposal for UN mediation in Kashmir—the one subject about which neither he nor any other Indian is ever equivocal. He spoke on Kashmir in all for twenty hours, which is quite something by even his own exacting standards, and then collapsed. Apart from setting a course record he also proved himself a

medical freak for on anxious examination by a doctor he was found to have a blood pressure of 220 which an hour later, had sunk to that of a hibernating bear—60. Two hours later, ignoring a doctor's injunction to take three weeks' holiday or risk dying, Krishna talked again for fifty minutes. It was quite a performance and it is precisely because of performances like this that the first sighs of relief uttered in the UN over his elevation to India's Cabinet have now turned to ones of regret. Perversely, he is missed.

And Menon's future? Who can say? Despite personal unpopularity he seems closer to the throne than ever and at a time when India may landslide towards a truly spectacular economic collapse, when the Communists are gaining in power, when the Congress Party is losing much of its prestige, and Nehru much of his popularity. The rapid march of events in Asia and the formidable coalition of Russia and mainland China may turn both him and Nehru toward closer co-operation with the Communist powers. Menon has shown no signs of dissenting from Nehru's tough internal treatment of the Communists. But there is always in him that ambiguity, that imponderable ambivalence, which leads him in nearly every instance to anti-Western statements and policies. Frequently one feels that he does it despite his better judgment, in spite of himself. He has come a long way since he was Mrs Besant's prize pupil and a good deal of that way was spent in the grimy poverty of Camden Town. Those are the years, one suspects, that he can never forget and can never forgive: long and weary years of waiting in the wilderness for recognition. The last time I saw him he was speaking to my Canadian friend at the close of those hectic weeks in 1953. 'I'm going home tomorrow,' he said wearily. 'Oh, New Delhi?' somebody said casually. 'Oh, no,' replied Krishna sharply, 'London!'

Home, apparently, is where the hurt is.

Peter Hastings

Nothing indeed but the possession of some power can with any certainty discover what at the bottom is the true character of any man.

Edmund Burke, LETTERS ON A REGICIDE PEACE, 1796

World's Lightest Metal May Change Civilisation's Course



A SILVERY-WHITE substance called lithium, the lightest of all metals, has begun rather suddenly to assume a highly important role in human progress. It is playing a significant part in thermonuclear energy; it is a vital ingredient in the high energy fuels to propel inter-continental rockets.

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IT'S A TERRIBLE LIFE

SOJOURNING IN SAMOA

Nino Culotta

TWO YEARS ago, when I left Sydney, it was raining, and had been raining for weeks. Mould and mildew and musty smells were an integral part of suburban life. Today, as I write, it is raining, and has been raining for weeks, and mould and mildew and musty smells are an integral part of life at Moto'otua, under cloud-crowned Mount Vaea, on top of which Robert Louis Stevenson 'lies where he longed to be', with a block of concrete to keep him down. Beads of moisture gleam in the fly wire, paper and typewriter are damp, perspiration runs down my shirtless chest and dampens the waist of my lavalava, and small red ants investigate my toes. But I wouldn't be anywhere else. Even at the end of the wet season, in March the month of storms, Samoa is beautiful.

James A. Michener says of part of it, the road from Faleolo airport to Apia, that no more beautiful drive can be found anywhere in the South Pacific. This statement could be applied to any road on Upolu, the most beautiful of the four beautiful islands that are Western Samoa. Roads and villages around the coast, mountains and waterfalls inland, and white water foaming on the reefs around them all. A lovely, generous, lazy land, where food grows on trees, nothing matters, nothing is ever urgent, and the Trade Winds come in April. A land where the old Polynesian way of life has scarcely changed in centuries. Outside commercial Apia, a few refrigerators, a few radios, an occasional ancient four-poster bed remind us of other lands and other ways. Lavalavas made of imported cloth are welcome additions to the ancient way, as is imported *pisupo*—any kind of meat in tins. An addition to the ancient games is *kilikiti*, but the gentlemen of the MCC would not recognize it.

British and Americans and Germans have come and gone, New Zealanders are going after 1960, and the language and the customs have survived them all. English is taught in all schools, and many Samoans speak it, but none to each other.

The United Nations Trusteeship Council expects New Zealand to deliver an independent democratic Samoa by November 1960. It is a thankless task, and I think a hopeless one. The

basic principles of democracy are universal suffrage and the right of private property. Samoans flatly refuse to accept either principle. The basic unit of their society is the family. Not 'mum an' dad an' the kids' as we know such a unit, but blood relations, adopteds, and volunteers serving an autocratic family head, who is elected. Being elected, he can also be deposed, but this is rare, as his potential leadership is well known before his election.

These family heads are known as *matai*. They administer the communal land and its products on behalf of the family. Their duty is to serve the family; the duty of the family is to obey them. Under the old system, the *matai* elected the village chiefs, the village chiefs elected the *faipule*—heads of traditional political districts—and the *faipule* governed the country. The first major step towards democratic government as we know it was taken last November, when a Legislative Assembly was elected, consisting of forty-one Samoans, five Europeans and two appointed official members (the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary). 'Universal suffrage' elected the five Europeans, but the *matai* alone elected the Samoan representatives.

Foreign goods are earned by the export of cocoa, copra and bananas. There is a strong objection to tourism, and to foreign capital. Basically, the *matai* rule the country, but since they are elected, the system could be called 'voluntary feudalism'.

Samoans are Christians. There are no exceptions. Every Samoan belongs to one of the established Churches. The London Missionary Society has the largest membership, closely followed by the Catholics, with Methodists, Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists bringing up the rear. There is a small band of Anglicans, mainly European. Everything stops on Sunday. Sunday is a day for dressing in white, going to Church, gossiping, visiting and sleeping.

They are a fun-loving people, and although Sunday is a day of no work, it is not a day of no laughter. Laughter is the sound most often heard in the land. It is heard loudest when somebody falls flat on his face in the mud.

Young men are broad-shouldered and powerfully muscled, but the corpulence and slow-moving dignity of middle age command great respect. From middle aged men is expected dignity, courtesy, knowledge of ceremonial customs and forms of social politeness, firmness of authority and decision. The elderly provide wisdom and advice, and receive high honour. The young work, and are expected to 'walk lightly and speak softly'. Rudeness, brusqueness and lack of consideration for

others are practically unknown. Samoan social civilization is highly evolved, and makes at least one Sydneysider humbly conscious of his past deficiencies in tendering full and due courtesy to his fellows. Of course, with no trains to catch, or timetables to keep, there is never need for haste, and haste is the breeder of most of our discourtesies.

Population? A census in September 1956 showed just under one hundred thousand of whom forty-five per cent were under fifteen years of age. As well as being a land of laughter, it's a land of children. The birthrate is around the four per cent mark. And the behaviour of the children is something we can really envy. Children must not annoy adults, and each is guarded by one a little older. Should the younger annoy, the older gets beaten. The result of this is that the younger, to quieten him, is given everything he wants. But before he can acquire delusions of grandeur, he in turn has a young one to keep quiet.

There is no stigma attached to illegitimacy—all children are welcome. They swell the family ranks, and increase the importance of the *matai*. The live wherever they wish, within the family—not necessarily with their mothers.

The mothers are probably God's most graceful creations. They wear what is called *pea*—an ankle length skirt and a hip length, short sleeved upper garment. None wears shoes. To see a Samoan woman walking is to see mobile poetry. To see one sitting cross-legged, arranging flowers, her hair in a bun on the back of her neck, her face composed, her graceful hands flowing slowly with no wasted movement, is to see a living Gauguin canvas. Even the younger ones have the natural grace inseparable from slow movement.

My housegirl, with a red hibiscus flower above her ear, is ironing. She sits down to do this. She is completing a shirt per hour, and singing softly to herself. She is decorative and flirtatious. It is rumoured that she has many 'husbands'. She rules my household very firmly, with much tongue-clicking over cigarette ash on the floor, or mountain-climbing boots left uncleaned, or the frightful expense of our egg-eating habits.

Samoans do not eat eggs. There is only one mouthful in an egg, whereas if left under the hen it will become a chicken, and in a few months a chicken is many mouthfuls. The chicken birthrate is probably higher than the human. Hens become broody after laying anything from six to a dozen eggs. They range freely, and forage for their own food, returning to their birthplace to sleep. Since they also fly like starlings, the catching and killing is generally done at night. Cooked in banana leaves

over hot stones, they are certainly delicious, but I still like eggs for breakfast, and no beautiful bare-footed beflowered provocative tongue-clicking female is going to stop me from eating them as I please.

The islands are self-supporting, and there is no public debt. The small European community likes potatoes and frozen mutton, but the Samoan is content to eat local food, supplemented by occasional *pisupo*. Beef is slaughtered twice weekly. There are about twelve thousand head of cattle grazing amongst the coconut trees. Hospitality is both a pleasure and an obligation, and a journey around outlying villages is a gastronomical ordeal. A food mat for one Aussie visitor will contain taro, *ta'amu* and *ufi* (root vegetables), a whole roast chicken, a large fish baked in a wrapping of coconut leaves, small fish, crabs, breadfruit, a couple of *palusami* (coconut cream and young taro shoots mixed with seawater and cooked in a breadfruit leaf), and a wild pigeon. There will be young coconuts for drinking, and a young girl sitting opposite to fan away flies. There are plenty of young girls, and not many flies. A guest's uneaten food is presented to him, to sustain his poor famished body over the next few miles.

Next week I go to Savai'i, the largest island of the group. I have only recently recovered from the hospitality of a week spent over there six months ago. It is a 'tougher' island, more recently volcanic, with large lava fields and few rivers. It also has fewer people—twenty-seven thousand. They are extremely fond of eating and entertaining visitors. And they like to provide girls to massage the legs of the weary walker. It's a terrible life. I miss the pleasures of the 8.10 and the 5.15, and hanging on by my eyebrows in the middle of the jostling, swaying, irritable mob, and fighting for a beer, and wondering if there's enough food in the house for the guest I'm bringing home.

But you can't have everything, can you?

Nino Culotta

TRADE UNIONISM IN SAMOA, OLD STYLE

It will be seen how completely the employers were at the mercy of the workmen, whether of house or canoe-builders—organizations which were all-powerful and fully alive to their importance, as well as ever ready to assert their dignity. No formal agreement was ever made as to the price to be paid for the work, but at intervals the remuneration was given, and if the earlier payments were not satisfactory to the workmen, they at once left the work, took their tools and their belongings with them, and went to commence work elsewhere. . . .

J. B. Stair, OLD SAMOA, 1897

TWO ERRORS IN LITERARY THEORY

D. C. Muecke

SOME years ago Professor R. G. Howarth published his *Notes on Modern Poetic Technique* (1949) which promulgated in Australia an official version, as it were, of two mistaken views about the nature of poetry. If in this article I refer mainly to Howarth's publication I do so because of his continuing influence, especially in NSW, upon teachers in training and hence upon secondary-school children, for whom one of his two misconceptions, his ultra-Imagist theory, has become a peculiar and almost ineradicable assumption. His other doctrine, which I shall call the Realist error, is not confined to the class-room but is current in the world at large, and Howarth can be blamed only for climbing too thoughtlessly on this misdirected bandwagon. The consequence for poets of practising what he preaches would be verse that is petty, insignificant, starved and dull; and readers who accepted his notions would find themselves unable to understand or enjoy most of the world's poetry.

Anyone who tries to follow sentence by sentence Howarth's chapter on the nature of poetry will find his way blocked by mere assertions, amateur psychology and muddled thinking, a mixed heap stubbornly irreducible to clear sense. But, as the author himself says, 'Nothing is quite meaningless'; and once the chapter is seen as an attempt at elaborating its basic assumption—'poetry is image in word'—some sort of meaning can be discerned in it; though when we read that 'poetry may exist in a single monosyllabic word' and that 'tree', 'house' and 'blue' are verbal reproductions of mental images, there seems nothing for it but to close the book with a poetic and monosyllabic comment.

In some paragraphs Howarth seems to imply that the single word 'tree' is, or rather contains, poetry. But then elsewhere it appears that not all images are poetry: 'On the reality or truth of an image depends its value'; 'Imagist poetry is the basic type: the *precise* recording of an impression' (my italics). This implies that the poetic image is one that reproduces for the reader the liveliness of the original sense-impression. The corollary to this Howarth quotes with approval from W. H. Davies: 'The poet must see things with his own eyes, hear them with his own ears; not with the eyes and ears of those who have written before him.' Howarth would allow the poet

to use symbols and the fashionable device of literary allusion but these exceptions are not enough to save from condemnation under W. H. Davies's dictum half the imaginative poetry of the world, including *The Aeneid*, *The Metamorphoses*, *The Divina Comedy*, *The Ancient Mariner* and:

*The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster
As amorous of their strokes.*

The absurdity of a theory that leads to such conclusions is obvious. All that is valuable in the notion that imagery may be drawn from the poet's own sense-experience is the self-evident proposition that when accuracy of description is necessary a writer should use his own eyes and ears and, as near as he can, tell the truth. But there are no grounds for asserting either that realistic description is always necessary, or even that an image, realistic or not, is the essence of poetry.

Those who recognize poetry and ask how it differs from what is not poetry must assume a difference either in kind or in degree. If in degree, they will look for the same things in both and will make no sharp division between what is poetic and what is not. If in kind, they will look for what distinguishes poetry, the usual discovery being that poetry has some mysterious quality, some power and glory that they call Beauty or Imagination. But Howarth, too hard-headed perhaps to entertain such a mystery, prefers to see the image as the distinguishing mark of poetry and even to identify poetry with the image verbatim reproduced. Since this might, he thinks, be a monosyllable, he concludes not only that a monosyllable may contain poetry but also that rhythm is not essential to poetry. And since images occur also in prose he has to end by implying that all prose is either poetry (when it has images) or philosophy (when it deals in abstractions) or both in alternation. But since this is obviously not true, he tries to escape his own argument by falling back on his theory that the true poetic image is the one which records actual sense-impressions of the writer. This gets him nowhere. On the one hand, prose has plenty of sense-images without becoming poetic. And on the other, poetry is full of images that are not based upon what the poet has seen with his own eyes; and there is also fine poetry which is made of sense-impressions at all:

TWO ERRORS IN LITERARY THEORY

*Forget not yet, forget not this,
How long ago hath been and is
The mind that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet.*

This is not to deny the great importance of imagery in poetry, though phonetic harmony, of which Howarth says little, is at least as important. What is wrong is his isolation of imagery as the essence of poetry, and his almost complete restriction of poetry to the verbal reproduction of actual sense-impressions.

This emphasis upon imagery gives inevitably the impression that the poem exists for the sake of the image, that there is a sort of pure poetry which is the verbal equivalent of the painter's still life and that what the poem sounds like and what ideas and feelings it expresses other than by its imagery are incidental matters having little or nothing to do with its poetic quality. The crude version of Howarth's idea of poetry is to be found in any schoolgirl's comment upon Keats's:

*I cannot see what flowers are at my feet
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves . . .*

The poet almost makes you smell the plants he describes in his wonderful pen-picture.'

The insistence upon the poet's duty to make poetry only out of his own sense-impressions might be sensible if poets had no other experience to make poetry out of, and no imaginative faculty to help them. I suspect Howarth has been prevented from seeing this by a strong Realist bias which inclines him to accept as axiomatic that the poet's concern is with the immediate tangible contemporary situation.

This opens up a large subject of which his ultra-Imagist theory is a comparatively small part. A selection of quotations from Howarth will serve to present this larger misconception—the Realist error. First, the current half-truths about Donne and Wordsworth and the moderns:

The revolution which gave us modern poetry was the result of an effort on the part of the poet to quit the dreamland of the past and interpret, in its proper terms, his own time. His work is thus modern in the sense in which John Donne's or William Wordsworth's was modern for its day: his subjects, his outlook, his language are up-to-date.

Then the inevitable ritual thrashing of Spenser and Milton:

Like Spenser, Milton constructed, for his major poems, a 'no language', after the Latin literary model, with small references to current speech.

Followed by the usual praise for the destruction of formality:

Three important nineteenth century poets attempted to make poetry out of the material and terms of their own day . . . Whitman alone succeeded, by writing solely in the language, even the colloquial language, of his time, as in the natural speech rhythms.

Some Australian poets, under the influence of English poets, have emancipated themselves from regular rhythm, rigid form, correct rhyme, 'poetic diction', and antique imagery, writing free verse and irregular rhymed verse, trying assonantal and consonantal effects, using the ordinary language of speech, translating their environment into appropriate imagery, and even beginning to use special devices such as contextual literary allusion.

To these quotations might be added two from T. S. Eliot:

The music of poetry, then, must be a music latent in the common speech of its time . . . it is the poet's business to use the speech which he finds about him . . . it is out of sounds that he has heard that he must make his melody and harmony.

What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some imaginary world totally unlike its own, an unreal world in which poetry is tolerated.

Such notions as these look for a poet whose images will be drawn only from his own environment, whose plays will have a contemporary realistic setting familiar to the audience, whose subject matter will be equally contemporary and familiar, and whose language, in both diction and rhythm, will be judged by its nearness to ordinary conversation. But to everyone who knows something of the poetry of the past or of the present such demands appear incredibly perverse. Imagine a surgeon professing to improve eyesight by an operation that destroys stereoscopic vision and the sense of colour!

To Howarth, poetic diction is a fearsome bogey; convinced of its frightfulness, he has never really looked straight at it. As generally understood, poetic diction means a special selection and arrangement of words for poetic effect. It means using words and arrangements of words that are not common in speech or prose. In a narrow sense it means using archaisms—words and word-orders that were once, but are no longer, used in speech or prose. If one objects to poetic diction one must reject the greater part of what the world accepts as poetry. It seems to Howarth that its guilt is manifest, but he exhibits so curious a knowledge of his subject that he ought himself to be in the dock. Moreover the conduct of his argument is illogical: you cannot prove that meat is poisonous by citing six cases of ptomaine poisoning and

the names of seven fairly healthy vegetarians. Howarth mentions some poets who have written poetry without poetic diction and some who used poetic diction but, in his opinion, failed to write poetry; but he does not assert that Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Shakespeare, Tasso, Racine or Shelley would have been greater poets if they had used the language of prose or ordinary speech.

Instead he runs a two-tooth comb through the tangles of literary history. We read of the kennings of Old English poetry, but not of its poetic compounds or its special syntax. We read of the late medieval vice of aureation, but not of the poetic diction of alliterative poetry. We read, with indelible surprise, that 'Poetic Diction, an artificially archaic language long regarded as specially suitable to poetry, was the invention of Edmund Spenser', but no mention of the *Pléiade* or even of those English archaizing poets that Spenser immediately followed—Surrey, for example, who in one sonnet has at least half a dozen archaic words, several archaic poetic phrases and much alliteration. We read that Dryden 'marked no difference in language between prose and verse'; but a list of the poeticisms to be found in Dryden is omitted from a quotation from Gray in the very same paragraph. We read that Pope's 'development is all towards a natural, easy, conversational way in verse'; we are not told that this conversational style was itself a literary convention, Pope's model for it being Horace; or that where Pope's method demands a higher style his couplets ring and chime with a language and movement beyond talk. We read that Coleridge does not defend eighteenth century poetic diction; we do not read that he admits it to his own poetry. Dr Johnson somewhere speaks of the cant of those who judge by principles instead of by perception. The remark is apposite when Spenser and Milton are reproached for their use of language, when the poetic diction of Shakespeare, Keats and Shelley is not mentioned or is glossed over, and when Walt Whitman is held up as an example of poetic success in spite of the fact that, or even because, 'a good deal of his work passes into prose, only an occasional image differentiating it from merely more or less rhythmic expression'.

Literary history cannot be read as an indictment of poetic diction. On the contrary, poetic practice and, until recently, literary theory overwhelmingly support it. Addison, who can be relied upon to reflect common informed opinion, wrote: 'The judgment of a poet very much discovers itself in shunning the common roads of expression, without falling into such ways of speech as may seem stiff and unnatural.'

Only success can perfectly justify what the poet does. All the same, arguments can be found to support the use of poetic diction and the traditional rhythms. It can be said in favour of poetry based upon speech rhythms and conversational idiom that it is better than bad traditional verse; its realism carries some conviction. But to make this realism a supreme and universal criterion, using the word 'natural' of poetry that approximates to speech and 'artificial' of poetry written in traditional metres, is to revert to the romantic primitivism of the Noble Savage era. This distinction between natural and artificial is rarely anything but misleading; speech is not more fundamental or more natural than poetry, it is merely more common and less artistic. Jonathan Swift, fastidious, conservative and aristocratic, judged speech by the standards of prose; the proletarian minds of this century judge poetry by the standards of speech, the greater skill by the lesser. We judge dancing by its own canons; the dancer may do whatever his body can and is judged by the standards of dancing, not by the casual shuffle of daily walking. The poet may do whatever his language can and should be judged by the standards of poetry, not by the spoken language which for the most part is neither 'vigorous' nor 'easy' but dull and slack. We don't ask people to sing in 'natural speech rhythms'. Yet poetry by origin is closer to singing than to talking.

Howarth, arguing against the use of poetic diction, does not always think to distinguish between speech and prose (see his remarks on Whitman above). The critics of the Renaissance, though not over-subtle on this matter, at least distinguished high, mean and base styles in poetry, with which figurative language and diction had to keep decorum. Now, perhaps, we should say that men speak and write, and poets make poetry, at many levels according to their audience, their subject and their manner of dealing with it. Many words and usages are proper at all levels, many are not; and if that is not common knowledge it is at least common practice and nothing to make a fuss about. But it makes the notion of archaisms less simple, since a word may be current at some levels and archaic at others. The verb 'sunder' is archaic in daily conversation but not in some poetry; words familiar in special contexts, like 'thou', or current only in transferred senses, like 'ardent' are capable of being redeemed in poetry even if not restored to daily use.

The question of diction and rhythm cannot be settled by a general rule; each poem needs a separate answer. Urbane satire written for an alert intelligent audience will probably be

composed in the idiom of good prose. A passionate lament will certainly avoid 'a natural, easy, conversational' style. A poet's work must be very much a matter of harmonizing the various elements of his poem: rhythm, diction, imagery, subject and manner must all be in accord. He has sometimes to reject words with irrelevant, distracting or clashing associations, sometimes to decide whether the rhythm and the intensity so far achieved are powerful enough to suppress the trivial associations of a common word or the feeling of unfamiliarity attached to an unusual one. The extreme Realist view would be that this accord can be reached if poets avoid rhythms remote from speech, and words, word-orders, imagery and subjects beyond those of daily familiarity.

Asking poets to make poetry to this timid recipe is like asking for bricks without clay. Howarth, to give him credit, allows poets a limited freedom from this tyranny of Realism by approving of experiments with irregular but artificial rhythms and with careful sound-patterns, though not apparently with regular rhythms or with artificial diction; but this concession does not really fit his theory and he does not mean to allow poets to escape very far. Yet if it is true that poetry, light verse apart, works by kindling the reader's imagination, by inducing in him a state of heightened consciousness which makes him receptive to the poet's total meaning, then poets must wonder if this can be done with the disenchanting diction of everyday, the rhythms of ordinary speech and images from an only too familiar environment. The answer will be found in the poetry of the past and of the present: if it can be done, examples certainly don't leap to mind. In all good poetry, I am tempted to assert against the Realists, there will be found either a rhythm, compulsive or musical, transcending the rhythm of speech, or some strangeness of language which, none-the-less, the imagination accepts as natural. The rare exceptions Howarth allows in *his* Realist theory only put him in the position of a government official permitting his sovereign to take a one-day trip into his own kingdom.

There remains the notion that the poet or dramatist should restrict himself to contemporary subjects and familiar settings, 'quit the dreamland of the past and interpret, in its proper terms, his own time'. 'People,' Eliot has said, 'are prepared to put up with verse from the lips of personages dressed in the fashion of some distant age; they should be made to hear it from people dressed like ourselves, living in houses and apartments like ours, and using telephones and motor cars and radio sets.'

The view that never the poetry but only snobbery keeps Shakespeare popular is less easy to maintain now that Dylan Thomas has demonstrated that people can still be reached by the imaginative use of language. Eliot's determination to compete with the superficial realism of prose drama even if it means (as it does mean) writing poetic drama without poetry must be put down to an elementary misapprehension of the nature of imaginative creation.

It has long been a practice, adequately approved by success, for dramatists to make their criticism of life or comment upon the contemporary situation by means of some story chosen from history or mythology. One good reason for this is that it relieves the dramatist of the burden and inconvenience of maintaining a superficial and profitless verisimilitude. In real life people are not given, either alone or in company, to saying out loud fully and clearly what they are feeling or thinking. A stage character who does this when dressed and otherwise behaving like one of ourselves will inevitably seem odd. But as to the habits of a personage dressed in the fashion of some distant age we have no strong presuppositions. We should not be surprised to hear strange language, poetry in fact, from the dreamland of the past and action itself as in a dream may be significant of truth without being realistic. Moreover the strangeness of the setting and, if the poet knows his business, the rhythms and the language of the poetry act reciprocally inducing in the audience that receptivity that full communication depends upon.

The cult of the contemporary and the colloquial with its dreary cant was irretrievably passé long before 1949; and the limitations of Realism were fully expressed in the sixteenth century by Sir Philip Sidney, who was not only a true poet but also one of the first of English critics:

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection [to nature], lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like: so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the Zodiac of his own wit.

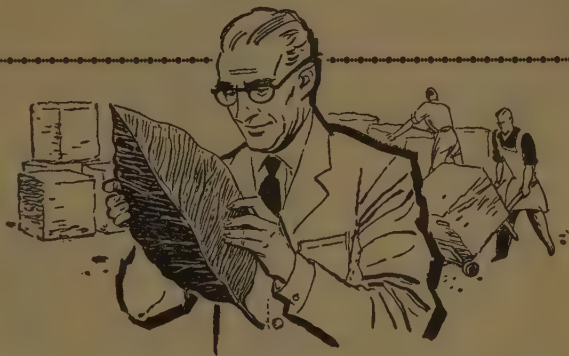
It is time the dwindling number of poets and critics who still pride themselves on their emancipation from the past began to emancipate themselves from complacent modernity and take a long look at what they've given up and what they've got.

D. C. Muecke

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ABSTRACT ART

Maximilian Feuerring

IT WAS no mere chance that a resurrection of abstract art occurred after the last war. Three different forces were responsible for this revival. They received a strong impetus during the war, but their origins lie much further back.

The year 1910 is generally accepted as marking the birth of abstract art, because in that year Kandinsky accidentally placed one of his paintings next to a multi-coloured cloth and discovered the value of pure colour. This is said to have led him to paint the first abstract water colour. The question whether this particular date is the material one and whether Kandinsky can be acknowledged as the real inventor of abstract art is still to be decided.

Actually the painters Tchurlianis and Mansuroff had been working in this field before him in Moscow, and Kandinsky is said to have been influenced by them. It is undisputed, however, that by 1913 abstract art had established itself with a multiplicity of expressions. There were Tatlin's abstract reliefs, Larianow's rayonism, Malewitch's suprematism, Mondrian's neo-plasticism and Robert and Sonia Delaunay's orphism. Just like fauvism, cubism and surrealism, abstract art became a new and fundamental current in modern art. But there seemed to be no genuine need for this form of art. It lacked general appeal and was taken up only by isolated groups in Moscow, Leyden, Munich and Paris. The age had different problems, which were being solved by Matisse, Bonnard, Picasso, Chagall, Braque and Soutine. It is also unrealistic to blame the slow development of abstract art on Lenin's condemnation or Hitler's ban, or again on the outbreak of World War II which interrupted the work of four hundred international painters who formed the group 'Abstraction-Creation' in Paris.

Since World War II however abstract art has developed into a broad current which takes in most countries. Paris gave the lead by organizing the first post-war exhibition of abstract art. In 1945 the Drouin Gallery introduced such pre-war abstractionists as Arp, Delaunay, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Domela, Harbin, Magnelli, Pevsner and Van Doesburg. 'Abstract' was the current theme, and Paris, highly sensitive to the prevailing mood, as usual seized the opportunity. Abstract art seemed to represent the cravings of a world shattered by war. It was at this

stage that the three impulses joined forces to bring about the vigorous resurrection of abstract art.

The first impulse was caused by a reaction against figurative or descriptive art. All possible treatments of this art form had been almost exhausted. There was no further development, but merely a number of proven variations and modulations. Paris was not content with this state of affairs for long and demanded an art that was creative and new.

The second impulse derived from unwillingness of the rising generation of painters to remain in the shadow of great masters such as Matisse, Bonnard and Picasso. Already during the war the young 'Peintres de la Tradition Française' had publicly proclaimed their sentiments at the Braun Gallery, in 1943. Even at that early stage they were prepared to throw off the influence of the masters and to set out unaided on a quest for new sources of inspiration. As soon as France was liberated this impulse developed into a powerful movement.

The third impulse was perhaps the most important one. It was caused by the purely visual experience of bombed cities. At first, such a sight produced horror and shock, but ultimately it became part of daily life during the war and for many years after it. All Europe shared this tragic landscape. Living so long among such ruins, people came to see in them the expression of their own horror. In a matter of seconds the orderly pattern of streets and houses would be transformed into macabre forms of chaos. The law of order gave way to the awesome law of accident.

Crumbling walls, piles of rubble, and steel frames twisted into bizarre shapes constituted ready-made compositions in which large, accidentally-created surfaces were set off against masses of debris, over all of which were superimposed the dramatic lines of rusty iron. This was an abstract painting. Even if a painter of the naturalistic school took such ruins as his subject, he could not help producing abstract shapes.

What does 'abstract' really mean? Kandinsky says in his book *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* (1910): 'We are concerned with a new harmony of beauty which formerly appeared as a disharmony. Starting from the principle of inner necessity, it is possible to associate pure colours with freely invented shapes and at the same time to eschew the ornamental. This is possible because creativeness depends on the artist's intuition, which sets its own limits and confines its freedom within an organic unity. It is not important whether the colours applied occur in nature or not. It is far more important whether they are necessary in the painting or not.' This is the beginning of a conception

of shapes and colours which are not imitations of nature, but of free forms which produce tensions solely by means of contrast, and resolve them in a balanced unity. The elementary interplay of surfaces, lines and proportions is regarded as sufficient to achieve different rhythms in space. Such a purely absolute conception of art should give the artist an almost unlimited field of creation.

In addition to this completely abstract view there are also many variants in which abstract shapes are combined with more or less real objects. This can be seen clearly in the works of Picasso, Braque, Leger or Max Ernst. In the early stages abstract art appeared as a kind of parallelism between the ideal and the real, and the terms 'imitative' and 'non-imitative' would be the safest method of differentiating between the various groups and conceptions. From the point of view of a purely technical analysis of this art form, during the period between the wars, it can be said that it moved along the lines of free forms or severe geometrical patterns, of dynamic or static construction, towards graphism and formal purity. But it still respected the most sacred element of the picture, namely the unity of the whole. Even the great innovator Paul Klee still observes it in his 'poetic associations'. It is also observed by Miro in his rudimentary 'embryonic compositions', and by Mondrian in his lucid 'anti-national and anti-individual', yet almost mathematically definable, relations between colour surfaces and lines.

Since World War II, however, abstract art has changed considerably. The inheritance of the past was used as a point of departure for new ways. So far none of the new trends can be said to have developed characteristics strong enough to dominate the entire field. Many groups, pursuing different lines, have sprung up, but mostly linked by a common ideology.

It may be said that while this art originated in Paris, it was 'processed' in New York. While Paris produces a more 'planimetrically rationalistic' art, in New York the emphasis is on 'unlimited irrationality'. Both schools emphasize a dramatic space-time relationship, without a clear definition of content. Instead of human figures in three-dimensional space, we now have self-sufficient forms and 'contraposts' of colour, and lights growing out of an immeasurable vacuum.

Having created a new space, the abstractionists now have the problem of populating it. Since they have renounced natural objects, they only have their own ego as a model. According to their dogma, they can describe the state of their emotions by the manner in which they allow their coloured surfaces to

intersect. Their symbols are arbitrary, completely private, and have not yet become a common language. Indeed it has been said that they possess secrets which one can only solve by living amongst them.

Some time ago, the *New York Times* quoted Rothko and Gottlieb as follows: 'To us art is an unknown world which can be explored only by those willing to take risks. This world of imagination is violently opposed to common sense. It is our function as artists to make the spectator see the world our way—not his way.' This pompous piece of pseudo-metaphysics is indicative of the woolly pronouncements which are made from time to time by abstractionists in the hopeless endeavour to explain and justify their work.

What does an abstract painting actually communicate to the viewer? Its coloured surfaces are not supposed to be interpretations of nature, but are supposed to be regarded as interesting phenomena in themselves. Such paintings could also include a section of an old wall, interlocked branches, clouds scudding across the sky, or chance configurations of natural topography. Abstractionist Willy Baumeister indicates that any chance phenomenon may form part of a picture for no special reason: 'Certain natural phenomena such as surfaces of water, waves and sand, the bark of trees, geological formations in quarries, everything that has structure is near to the present-day painter.' Pierre Soulages says: 'When I start a painting I do not know what I am going to do.' Gerard Schneider maintains he is not 'interested in defining the conscious or the unconscious in a picture. Only the inner life of the picture gives it its value.' Many other statements of this kind show how awkwardly abstractionists cling to accepted terms in order to justify their views, and how this leads them inevitably into proclaiming a doctrine of automatism.

It is therefore not surprising that Jean Dubuffet, the most intellectual among them, had the courage to state the position clearly. He simply said: 'A painting which I like has to be one which ceases to be a painting. It can be painted by anybody without any preparation, without any artistic education, and without talent.' (*Peintres informels*). Dubuffet has been accused of supplying arms to the enemies of abstract art, but in drawing the curtain of mystique aside, he has actually made an honest contribution towards an understanding of this art.

What excitement and attraction does abstract art hold for the artist? Could it be the thrill of visualizing his inner self? Does he experience the same shock as primitive man when he

first saw his reflection on a surface of water?—An abstract painting really amounts to nothing more than looking at one's inner self in an imaginary mirror. The abstract painter may of course be able to develop some personal features into a style of his own, but ultimately his repertoire must become exhausted, and he finds himself borrowing from his neighbour. Living with one's own ego as one's only company can be very boring. When there are no more discoveries to be made, art hardens into convention, and style turns into mannerism. This is why many painters have deserted abstractionism. But to the enthusiasts, particularly in New York, abstract art, among other things, means an automatic membership of the *avant-garde*. Melquist writes in his *L'Amérique comble son retard* that some of these Americans are so conceited that in Paris they 'did not find the superb French wine to their taste, thought French cooking inferior and accused French art of being very retarded'.

Meanwhile this 'optical emotion' as abstract art is often called, has developed many off-shoots such as automatism, tachism, action painting, abstract lyricism, abstract expressionism, abstract surrealism, abstract impressionism, *l'art brut* and many others. Abstractionists often refer to their 'appointment with the universe', but since the universe is such an immeasurable entity, every free interpretation of it is permissible. When challenged, this type of work is often called intuitive. It becomes a matter of conscience, and not many painters can put up with this form of deception for long. Many present-day abstractionists, afraid of getting lost in their private 'universe', are trying to return to a safe world of real subjects. They are beginning to talk of an 'abstract landscape' as Camille does, when he puts childishly distorted moons, trees and houses into his paintings.

Messagier paints great surfaces in brown and yellow which look like dried up rivers and sand flats. Martin Barré singles out simplified elements of modern buildings and constructions. Dufour and Serpanges assemble bouquets, while Corneille and Laubies introduce an oriental note. Pierre Soulages simply states that if 'a completely concrete object should emerge in the course of my work, I shall accept it, provided, of course, it strikes me as a poetic contribution to the unity of the painting'.

In his *L'Aventure de l'art abstrait* Michel Ragon emphasizes that the erotic element plays an important part in abstract art. Pevsner's sculptures are 'vaginal', while Brancusi's are 'phallic'. Arp is 'scatological' rather than erotic. Stahly's sculpture 'Eclosion' is actually nothing more than a very realistically

enlarged vagina. Etienne Martin's large, ponderous piece 'Grand Couple' represents the two human sex organs. He claims that because they were executed in large dimensions, they are entitled to be regarded as abstract.

It would be wrong, however, to regard all abstract art as decadent and the artists as candidates for a horror chamber. Every art trend has its exaggerations, and it would be unjust to judge it solely by them. When during a lecture by Leon Degaud in 1949 a member of the audience asked: 'Are cretins not justified in having a cretin art of their own?' he voiced the reaction of the general public to this problem. Even more authoritative was the attitude of Paul Valéry, when he said he was 'not interested in the cork, but rather in the wave that carried it'.

Abstract art is a reflection of the post-war world, and the artists are merely trying to devise forms of expression for the impulses which they receive from contemporary life. But they have as yet not found the answer to their problem. We need a genius to synthesize the thought and feeling of our century so convincingly that it will be accepted by everyone.

Abstract art has already achieved a number of things. It has provided us with knowledge of the self and has shown us the limits of an individual's potentialities. It has freed the artist from the object, and has made him aware of the importance of every brush stroke as a function of painting. It has protected him from slavish imitation, allowing him to build up his subject, thereby revealing his artistic temperament as a fusion of his intellect and his emotion.

It might be said that every artist has to pass through an abstract stage in order to discover these values. This is true of most leading contemporary painters. Some remained longer in the abstract field than others, but all of them profited by their sojourn, enriching their personal style. But what does the future hold for abstract art as an end in itself? An art which cannot visualize a portrait, a figure composition, a landscape, or a still life, can only be regarded as impoverishing art, and not enriching it. The philosophers would say that the voluntary renunciation of the impressions from our surroundings is a withdrawal to the outskirts of reality and to a poorer life on the periphery of existence.

Maximilian Feuerring

EARLY TRIALS OF THE ABC NEWS SERVICE

M. F. Dixon

THE ABC's independent news service has been an accepted fact for more than ten years; and there is now no outward evidence of the public and press controversy which preceded its introduction on 1 June 1947. Rarely nowadays does even a 'letter to the editor' criticize the Commission for some real or imaginary defect in its service; and the metropolitan daily newspapers which used to hold up their hands in horror at the suggestion that the service might cost as much as £100,000 a year, now never bother to mention, even in their news columns, the fact that for the year ended June, 1956, the expenditure on the service was pretty close to £400,000. This fact ten years ago would have rated an editorial in red ink!

There are at least three reasons for this calm acceptance by the newspapers that the ABC service is costing far more than they even dared to suggest it might, when they were looking for arguments to defeat its introduction. (1) The past seven or eight years have seen costs in all directions leap to fantastic heights; and newspaper production costs have risen probably as steeply as any other; (2) the ABC service did not interfere with newspaper circulations as the papers in the early days professed to fear that it would; and (3) the papers themselves have entered the broadcast news field either through their own commercial networks or by arrangement with sponsors through independent stations.

Probably a fourth reason could be given—the decision of the ABC to rest on the number and length of bulletins with which it introduced the service in 1947 instead of going 'all out' to dominate the news field as the papers feared it might and as it could have done had it wished. There are in the Commission's files today recommendations for an expanded service which would have given Australian listeners a far better cover of home and overseas news than is possible under the present restricted schedule; and the cost would have been little if any greater than today. But the Commission, which had opposed the introduction of the independent service, refused to entertain the idea; and apart from an expansion of its regional services, which are mainly at the expense of country newspapers, the ABC's schedule of national and state bulletins today is the same as it was fifteen years ago.

Relations between the newspapers and the Commission were decidedly strained when I joined the ABC in 1936 as its first news editor. The then chairman, Mr W. J. Cleary, told me at my first interview that despite the existence of a 'gentlemen's agreement' for the use of their news, he feared that at any time the papers might withdraw this right mainly because of the Commission's refusal to pay advertising rates for the publication of its daily programme summaries which up till then had been treated as news. The estimated cost to the Commission was £90,000 per annum; and Cleary felt he could do much better by producing his own weekly journal. That came some years later; but in the meantime the papers had reverted to the free use of the programme summaries.

The so-called 'gentlemen's agreement' between the Commission and the newspapers was in reality a lop-sided affair. True, the Commission paid only £200 a year for the right to take news from the papers a number of times a day but this 'right' was so restricted as to the times and periods of broadcast and the quantities of news to be used, that in reality it was worthless. Cable news was restricted to two hundred words a day, one hour after publication, with the first evening broadcast at the totally unsuitable hour of 7.50 p.m. Australian news was restricted to three-minute periods; and the items chosen for the first morning bulletin had to stand until midday, when one minute was allowed for 'new' news.

What irked the news staff most was the ban on the collection of stories between editions of the papers, and at night. Sydney could have been half destroyed by fire and we would not have been able to mention it in a news bulletin. As an act of grace, however, the newspapers would have agreed to an announcer rushing to the spot with a microphone to make an 'outside broadcast'. The 'gentlemen's agreement' provided that this could be done 'not more than twenty-five times a year'.

I must confess that in its efforts to serve listeners to the best of its ability the Commission's small but enthusiastic staff breached this 'gentlemen's agreement' a number of times during 1936 and 1937; but the newspapers did their share of breaching it too. The Commission was entitled to use only such overseas news as came through the AAP service; but it was clearly understood that all 'hard' news would come that way. Imagine our feelings then when we found, almost daily, a 'hard' news story in the *Sun* credited to its own special representative. Such stories were not available to us; but one day in May 1937 when the *Sun* carried the story of the loss of the giant

dirigible, *Hindenburg*, under a special representative by-line we decided to call its bluff. A few minutes after our broadcast a member of the *Sun* editorial staff was on the line demanding to know by what right we had used the story. We told him, in equally plain language! Following a protest by the Commission the directors of AAP decided to increase substantially the daily wordage brought to Australia by that service and to ensure that in future it carried all the important 'hard' news. This was but one of the many arguments we had with the papers over the interpretation of the 'gentlemen's agreement'.

The abdication crisis in England late in 1936 gave the Commission its first excuse for breaking into the overseas news field; and we followed this with an independent weekend coverage of the Sino-Japanese war, supplied by a member of the editorial staff of the *North China Daily News*. At the time of the Munich crisis in late 1938 we were getting a direct daily coverage of official news releases from London; and when Hitler invaded Poland a year later the ABC was the first by many hours, to give the news to the Australian people.

These excursions into the independent news field were justified by our repeated failures to reach a firm agreement with the papers for a more equitable use of their news. The Commission was willing to pay a reasonable sum for the news provided it was allowed to use it at greater length and at more suitable times. Soon after Australia entered the war the then Minister for Information, Henry Gullett, himself a journalist, summoned a conference of newspaper and broadcasting representatives in Melbourne and told him bluntly it was the government's policy to give the people the latest news at the earliest possible moment. 'We don't want any restrictions', he said, 'and we won't tolerate any unnecessary scares.' As a result of the Minister's intervention an agreement was reached between the Commission and the newspapers which ensured a greatly improved news-broadcasting service; and the Commission later capitalized this by making its national news bulletins available, free of cost, to every commercial radio station in Australia for the duration of the war.

A few months before Japan attacked Pearl Harbour the Commission appointed Carlos P. Romulo, of Manila, as its correspondent in the Philippines, and his despatches were particularly valuable until he became actually involved in the fighting himself. Romulo later emerged as a world figure, through becoming President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and earned the doubtful distinction of being

labelled by the Russian delegate, Mr Vishinsky, as 'an empty barrel full of noise'. Oddly enough Romulo never claimed payment for his services from the ABC; and should he happen to read this and feel in need of a few dollars, I am sure the Commission will be happy to turn up his account and reward him for his work.

Shortly before the outbreak of war the Commission made a major move in the news-gathering field in Australia by appointing a well-known journalist, Warren Denning, as its Canberra representative with a special assignment to cover the Federal Parliament. The newspapers resented the appointment because as it was made at the direction of the Lyons government following a dispute with the newspapers over the use of government statements, they could do little about it. As a direct result of Denning's appointment we had first break of many important stories originating in Canberra. We were also able to give listeners first news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. It was an ABC reporter who first interviewed General Douglas MacArthur on his arrival in Australia; and later the General broadcast his famous message, 'I came through and I shall return' through an ABC microphone.

ABC field correspondents during the Pacific war included Chester Wilmot who later became famous as the author of the best-seller *The Struggle for Europe*, and John Elliott who was accidentally shot during the Pacific fighting when he was mistaken for a Japanese soldier.

News of the bombing of Darwin, the allied victory in the Coral Sea, the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities by American airmen, and the death of President Roosevelt were amongst the tremendous happenings of their time which reached Australian listeners first through the ABC. The cessation of fighting in both the European and Pacific wars also provided scoops for the ABC.

Cleary, who had been chairman of the Commission from 1931 and had at the outset strongly supported the establishment of an independent service, later gave way and favoured an agreement with the papers. This astonished and dismayed the news staff which naturally assumed that having acquitted itself so well during the war, there would be no further challenge to its right to collect its own news when peace came. Cleary's next astonishing move was to tender his resignation to the government which after some delay, accepted it. This was in 1944. Cleary gave no public reasons for this unexpected move but privately he hinted that differences of opinion with the general manager made him

disinclined to carry on. He was succeeded as chairman by another member of the Commission, Mr R. J. F. Boyer (now Sir Richard) who immediately set about fixing up an agreement with the papers for the sum of £20,000 per annum which had been named by Professor Douglas Copland, (who had been called in as arbitrator) as a reasonable figure. But Prime Minister John Curtin refused to sanction the agreement until it had been reported on by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting which heard evidence from all interested parties. The newspapers put up a strong case against an independent service and were supported by the ABC chairman, Mr Boyer, the vice-chairman, Mr E. R. Dawes and the general manager, Mr C. J. A. Moses. Another member of the Commission, Mr J. S. Hanlon, who died a few years ago, supported the setting up of an independent service and I, as head of the news department, was called on to give evidence too.

It was certainly an anomalous position for me to be in; but I felt the case was so strong for an independent service that I had to give it my unqualified support. A few weeks before the inquiry opened, the general manager suggested that I should go on a tour overseas to examine news broadcasting methods in other countries, and the chairman also told me that I had earned a trip by my work during the strenuous war years. He had no doubt I could bring back information that would be of great value to the Commission in the future conduct of its service. It was a tempting proposal; and had I not felt that a principle was at stake, I should certainly have accepted it. But at that stage I could not go back on the attitude I had maintained for so long, that in the interests of democracy, the ABC should have its own Australian news-gathering service. The papers could, if they wished, combine to dictate what news the people of Australia should read, but they had no right to dictate what news they should hear. An ABC independent service, free of all social, political and advertising influences was, in my opinion, a prime necessity; and as I had the facts and figures to support the case for independence I felt bound to 'face the music' even though it brought me into direct conflict with the general manager and the chairman and vice-chairman of the Commission.

In due course the parliamentary committee submitted a majority recommendation in favour of an independent service; the Act was amended accordingly, and then began the big task of organizing the service throughout Australia. We had less than a year to do it, because soon after parliamentary

approval had been given, the newspapers served notice on the Commission that they would cease supplying it with news after the end of May 1947. Fortunately the task was completed in time. In the interval I had been relieved of editorial control of the service, which I had held since 1936, and had to concentrate solely on administrative work. A year or so later there was a further reduction in my status (but not in my salary) and ironically, after having always had more work than I could handle for a good many years, I now found myself with far too little to do. The Commission had in the meantime created the position of editor-in-chief of the service and appointed a sub-editor from *Sydney Sun*, Mr W. S. Hamilton, to the post. The Commission's next move was to abolish the position to which I had been relegated and advise me that the only post available to me was that of Controller of Broadcasts in External Territories, with headquarters at Port Moresby. It was a senior post, carrying a good salary and living allowance, and I should have been happy to take it had not two Sydney specialists advised me, as I was close to sixty, not to go to the tropics. I then had no alternative but to accept the Commission's offer of retirement.

I had the satisfaction, however, of knowing that the independent service had been established and was working well, although not as well as I had hoped. I had planned for a nightly round-up of Australian news for the benefit of listeners as a whole, and for the centralization of regional services at a considerable saving in cost; but these recommendations were unfortunately pigeon-holed.

The ABC today employs one hundred and twenty-six graded journalists in Australia and has a London staff of nine. It also employs a special representative in south-east Asia; and last year it began the nightly transmission of TV news programmes from Sydney and Melbourne. The Commission's news service is much more comprehensive than that broadcast by any commercial network; and despite the threefold increase in cost, I feel that every penny spent on it is justified. It is the lifeblood of national broadcasting, and even after more than seven years' retirement I still take pride in having made some personal contribution towards its establishment.

M. F. Dixon

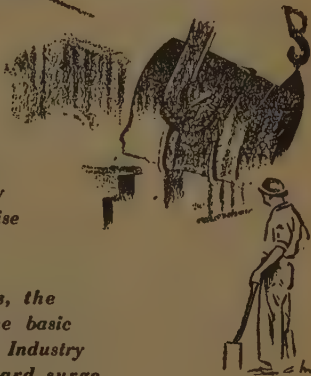
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living conditions that modern
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THE SCREEN WRITER'S TASK

Charles Higham

AT THE present time, when many films are no more than literal transcriptions of television and stage plays, the whole question of writing for the screen needs to be reconsidered. It has been the custom of critics to ignore the screen writer, despite the fact that his contribution often decides in its own a film's aesthetic success or failure. There are screen plays which contain detailed instructions to the director even about staging, lighting and histrionic expression. Yet those who mistakenly follow reviewers in the daily and weekly press may come to believe that directors and stars create a film on their own account, making up the dialogue as they go along.

In recent years, screen writers' associations and guilds have given for the critic's attention. They point out that the film-writer's position resembles that of a playwright whose entire career is ignored in favour of the directors of his plays and the actors who have appeared in them. They draw attention to distinguished writers who have worked in cinema: Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, Isherwood, Auden, Eliot, Shaw, Moulton, Joyce Cary, Lillian Hellman, Cocteau, Prévert and Sartre. From many scripts they can take examples of scenes which the screen writer has described shot by shot, and which have nevertheless been praised, not for their literary qualities, but for their poetic images, attributed to the director's skill.

Ignorance and indifference apart, few film critics are aware of the precise degree of responsibility a writer or director may have for a given film. At times, a writer may control the entire approach and execution of a film; at others, he is merely a tool in the hands of the producer.

Creative collaboration between the director and the writer often leads to happy results. The director, understanding as he does the enormous complexity of shooting problems, can help to shape dialogue and sound-stage direction on the technical level, even if he cannot write acceptably on his own account. The melodramas of Alfred Hitchcock are known to be planned down to the minutest detail of lighting, sound effect and composition of dialogue during intensive conferences with his writers. This sometimes makes for a cold and calculating result; technical ingenuity has then defeated its own purpose and the dramatic impact is lessened. Other directors choose to shoot films 'off

the cuff', designing dialogue scenes in immediate advance of shooting. The recent adaptation of *War and Peace* suffered from this lack of method.

Better results may be obtained when the director encourages the writer to take over the main creative responsibility for a film. He may prompt his scenarist with suggestions, but he will not seek to upset the literary shape and balance by insisting on purely technical considerations. He will encourage people of literary ability to work with him.

William Wyler is a director with a deep regard for the writer. His films are works of art in the pictorial sense; they are also works of literature. His collaboration with Robert Sherwood, Lillian Hellman and Ben Hecht bears witness to the intelligence of his guidance and the aesthetic satisfaction of the result. Wyler has enhanced his films by using his directing skill, not to override dialogue, but to give it point. His discreet and exact use of camera always throws dialogue into relief, sharpening it by a carefully chosen angle or a purposeful movement; his sound track is designed with subtle and devious care to pick up various changes in key, shadings and tensions in the actors' delivery. In *The Heiress* adapted by Ruth and Augustus Goetz from Henry James's *Washington Square*—he enhanced the sober script by a meticulous choice of camera position and by an impeccable flair for the proper sound effect: the cold snap of the scissors as the ugly daughter completes her embroidery, the camera tilted behind a tall chair as the embittered Dr Sloper delivers a wounding phrase. By timing his dialogue to its containing sequence as James timed his to its containing paragraph, Wyler matched exactly the elliptical but precise sobriety of the original *novella*.

Another American director, George Cukor, has shown himself to be a literary-minded craftsman of the first order, always alive to the necessity for retaining the balance and harmony of the skilled screen play. He recognizes the importance of monitoring delivery, and uses his camera to sustain and illustrate dialogue instead of swamping it as Orson Welles has done. In his most complete achievement, the melodrama *Gaslight*, he designed each scene to bring out the utmost meaning from the accomplished lines written by his authors, John Van Druten, Walter Reisch and John Balderston. He instructed his actors to deliver them with regard for pause, music and attack, from a discreet whisper behind a fan to a startled cry down a darkened stair-well at night. In England, David Lean has shown respect for the dialogue writer, and care in the recording of the sound

rack. In his *The Passionate Friends* he employed the voices of his actors in a lyrical counterpoint, the lines being spoken with an extraordinary sense of shape and propriety by his leading players. In France, the work of Charles Spaak, Prévert and Cocteau is revered. Prévert's script for *Les Amants de Verone* and Spaak's for *The Idiot*—from Dostoevski's novel—are works of literature in their own right; and Cocteau's adaptation of his own *Orpheus* is an enormous improvement upon his stage play. In Germany before Hitler's power, Carl Mayer created a number of screen plays which brought over to this century the whole tradition of romantic decadence that Mario Praxinos was so exhaustively chronicled; Caligari and his malignant descendants, corrupt, evil, self-obsessed, haunt the German cinema even now. That they spring from the original intelligence of Mayer will surprise only those who underestimate the power of the filmwright to influence and to move.

It is of course true that the business of writing screen plays for the commercial feature film seldom allows for this kind of individual expression. Many writers, including Auden, have for this reason preferred to work in documentary films. Indeed, the existence of so many screen plays with personal idiosyncrasies—and even, in some cases, literary excellence—is all the more extraordinary when one realizes how mechanical the procedure for the writing of a script has to be.

The creation of a screen play often requires as many as fifteen drafts (Lamar Trotti's highly polished adaptation of Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* is a case in point). Most scripts have to go through three preliminary stages: the first treatment consists of a bare story outline with a few 'visuals' lightly sketched in and a slight adumbration of the characters. This treatment allows the studio executives to decide whether the original book, play or idea looks sufficiently promising cinematically to be persevered with. After a favourable decision, a second treatment is prepared, including a more detailed description of the characters, and perhaps a few lines of dialogue to suggest to the director which stars should be contracted, how large a budget allowed, and which technicians engaged.*

Work can now begin on the basic script. Its completion is headlined to coincide with the availability of the technical crew, of the actors and of the musical composer. The finished

* Some cameramen, for example, specialize in certain kinds of work: John Alton and Lee Garmes in low-key, heavy contrast photography suitable for melodramas, Leon Shamroy and Ray Rennahan in colour camerawork suitable for musicals or Westerns, and so on.

shooting script often looks incomprehensible to the layman: it contains complex data on locations required for particular scenes, time of day and lighting required, exterior or interior, suggested musical accompaniment and music cues, as well as indications of expression against lines of dialogue, sound marks and footage lengths for each sequence. The 'trailer' for a film is separately scripted, and, since it necessitates rapid cutting and gives only snatches of key scenes, it has to be designed with a great deal of intricacy and cunning.

Film dialogue cannot afford the rhetorical pleasures of stage dialogue, except where it transcribes an accepted 'classical' author. ('Classical' in film terminology tends to include Shakespeare and Dickens as well as Sophocles.) This dialogue has to be absorbed by an audience immensely larger than a theatre can command even in a very long run, and it cannot afford to pass over the simplest mind. Moreover, the film writer has to consider technicians' requirements: he has to remember the costume designer, the sound recorder, the special effects designer (who is responsible for such things as earthquakes and flying carpets) and the art director (who dictates what shall go into an 1875 reticule or a Babylonian sarcophagus). Each one of these craftsmen receives the script, and he must be satisfied with it before shooting can begin.

Over and beyond his technical considerations, the screen writer manages quite often to produce an original work of literature which will be read by very few members of the public, will almost never receive critical attention, and which will bring the writer none of the prestige and personal regard which the stage dramatist can attract.

It is not surprising that the screen play is hard of access and eludes the analysis of many. Great screen plays, like Lamar Trotti's for the film *Wilson* and Dudley Nichols's works for John Ford, have been published in America, but have received scant notice. For the most part, the screen play would seem to remain inseparably bound up with the film of which it is the basis; it has no clearly independent life and cannot be read with pleasure save by constant reference to the 'visuals'. The main business of the script writer is to adapt the work of other people: few have managed to sustain throughout their work a recognizably personal scheme of thinking in the way that novelists or stage playwrights can do. Nevertheless, that few have surmounted all technical obstacles in a remarkable way: one has only to think of the vehemently left-wing scripts of John Howard Lawson for *Blockade* and *Sahara*, with their references to the

Spanish Civil War, and of the strange graph of Nunnally Johnson's career from the bitter Socialist protest of *Prisoner of Shark Island* and *The Grapes of Wrath* to the right-wing stand of his recent comedies and melodramas, to realize the screen writer's potentialities for public influence. The most pernicious, as well as the most wholesome ideas can be purveyed through the apparently empty screen play; the audience, which 'goes to the cinema to relax' and does not want to think hard about what it is listening to, can be subtly affected by the scenarist who is sufficiently skilful in sugar-coating his propaganda. Although the Un-American Activities Committee undoubtedly became over-zealous in its onslaught on Hollywood's fellow-travellers, its calling of many scenarists to account showed a correct appreciation of the power of the screen writer.

Strindberg often complained of the restrictions of the playwright's medium, regretting the intervals between acts during which the audience can escape from 'the suggestive influence of the author-hypnotist'. He pointed out that the painted scenery, the foot-lights, the make-up and the emphatic voices of the actors all helped to dissipate the writer's power. None of these restrictions exist in the screen play; moral, political or commercial considerations more often frustrate the writer than technical ones. The screen writer can command the limitless resources of the camera and the sound track to communicate simple and cogent ideas to audiences, and thereby influence them for good or ill. Within the guise of the comedy, the melodrama, the popularized tragedy, he can propagate theories that will enter the sub-conscious of the millions of people who are ready to receive anything, unequipped (because of their belief that they are only being entertained) to put up a defence against insidious suggestions and proposals. The screen writer is the least acknowledged of contemporary authors; but he is the most influential, the most subtly dominating of them all.

Charles Higham

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A Quadrant Prize of two guineas will be offered, through the kindness of a donor, in the competition which will be conducted this year for students under eighteen by the Society for Italic Handwriting in Australia. The prize will be awarded to the entry judged best for age of all the section winners of the competition. The Society has simplified the rules of its competition: samples of handwriting may be sent not later than 31 July to Mr McDonald, SIHA Competition Organizer, Camberwell Grammar School, 55 Montalbert Road, Canterbury, Victoria.



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PARTY, STATE AND PEOPLE

Neville Hoffman

THE TERM 'left' has been abducted so often by those who have no claim on it, with the gleeful connivance of those who long for its departure, that some thought is necessary to recall its true place. What it should mean is a predilection for altering the status quo in a manner which will strengthen the hand of those opposed to the unjust privileges of power and wealth. If, then, there was ever a Man of the Left it is Milovan Djilas. Before the war he had been imprisoned as a revolutionary; he had fought in the long partisan war against Hitler and had emerged as one of the three top men in Tito's post-war Communist government, only to abdicate his position and oppose the regime he had helped to create when he saw that it was an obstacle to the ideal of a classless society to which he had dedicated himself. For the militant thesis in his now famous book, *The New Class* (Praeger, N.Y.), he had been sentenced to the same gaol in which he was imprisoned by the pre-war monarchy.

In the advance publicity before the book had arrived in this country, we had heard that Djilas had argued that a new class has arisen in Communist countries consisting of 'the Communist political bureaucracy, which uses, enjoys, and disposes of nationalized property'. This political bureaucracy seeks to use the state as an instrument of its class rule over the rest of society. Thus it appeared that Djilas had placed the Communists in the same position in their own countries as the monopolists of the west appear in Communist propaganda. The effect this analysis would have on the peoples of Eastern Europe now emerging from the Stalinist ideology may easily be imagined. They would not need to rethink the propaganda they had absorbed, but merely shift its field of application.

Yet Djilas, through his long and intimate experience on the highest levels, is able to describe the role of the state in Communist societies much better than in this simplified Leninist picture. Even though the Communists try to use the state as the instrument of their class rule, they are here faced with their most important difficulty. The new class cannot admit its social position, and must generally frame its laws as if it does not exist. Thus whilst under the law all kinds of freedoms are permitted, of speech, assembly, etc., secret, extra-legal means must be resorted to, via the police and party apparatus, to ensure that these freedoms are used only to buttress its position.

And so it is here that Djilas breaks with the Titoist characterization of Soviet society as 'bureaucratic state capitalism', since the state is not the real power in the economy, but, like the rest of society, is in conflict with the new class which stands above it. In reality, state capitalism would be a great advance on this system, since it would allow an independent judiciary and the rule of law, and hence the emergence of an opposition which would free society's organizations from their paralysis. 'It would not be necessary,' Djilas writes, 'to establish the fact that in contemporary Communism a new owning and exploiting class is involved . . . if some anti-Stalinist Communists including Trotsky, as well as some Social Democrats, had not depicted the ruling stratum as a passing bureaucratic phenomenon. . . .'

The class interpretation runs into objections from people who admit that the 'bureaucratic caste' enjoys exclusive power and privileges, but shy at calling it a 'class'. It is rather like an argument between two zoologists: it is not an elephant, but merely a huge animal with big ears, tusks, and a trunk—a mammal of the proboscian order. It all depends which glossary

you use, but it is necessary to appreciate that to the extreme left, at which this book is aimed, the term 'class' is a trigger word. They can tolerate a large measure of evil acts, committed by an arbitrary bureaucracy, and even allow it their loyal support; but the same acts, when seen to be committed by a class, would arouse them to the fiercest opposition.

Whatever the niceties of terminology, if the top politicians in the Soviet really had come to own the whole works as a joint-stock company, they would not need to act any differently.

Though concerned of course with Communist society, the question which Djilas is discussing is important to socialists in the west. It is not a matter of what name to call the people who will boss us around for the next fifty years but whether capitalism will give way to oligarchy or to true democracy. It is here that Djilas has a reassuring answer. Our politicians, he tells us, have never aspired to own nationalized property, but merely administer it under control of an elected parliament. So he remains firmly socialist, and is very attracted to the democratic socialist movements of the west.

A subsidiary theme in the book in his description of how movement for reform is paralysed by the structural peculiarities of the Communist state. Thus the Trade Unions in a Communist state are transformed into 'company' or 'yellow' organizations, whose role is no longer that of bargaining for better conditions but of increasing production and raising morale. In a very understating exposition, he shows the transformation in role of a band of comrades struggling on behalf of those fighting against vested power and privilege into Organization Men defending the power and privileges of their leaders against the working class after their party has attained power. Having played a leading part in attempting to introduce workers' self-government in Yugoslavia, his picture now is one of the workers' councils having become controlled by the party bond, because their leaders are too much subject to command from above.

This is indeed a central problem of the labour movement throughout the Communist orbit, and has existed since its inception. It was the issue in the Kronstadt sailors' revolt with its slogan 'Soviets Without Bolsheviks!' it was in Martov's mind, not only when he opposed Lenin's proposal of a party with military-style discipline in 1903, but when he quit the party and entered the Trade Unions in 1924; and it was seen in the polarizing of the Hungarian revolution around the genuine Central Workers' Council against the party rulers. Though unlikely to reach Poland—where it would almost certainly become the bible of the new revisionists—if the book does nothing else, it may drive home to those supporters of the left in the west who dare to read it that any programme for socialism which places total power in the hands of the leaders of a single party can only result in a tyranny which frustrates the aim.

It is unfortunate that he has chosen to say so little about some of the developments in his own country. The decollectivization he dismisses as insignificant, viewing it as a mere concession which could be withdrawn at any time, and he does not even mention the introduction of a market economy in Yugoslavia. Yet surely, these two steps, on his own analysis, would have greatly reduced the scope for the compulsive role of the new class, even if they have not shifted it from its social position. He displays a weakness for oversimplification also when attempting to apply the same explanation to all the Communist revolutions, and in extrapolating their success as inevitable for all undeveloped countries.

Yet this fault does not detract from his general characterization of the countries which have modelled themselves more closely on the Soviet.

may be said that the description of a totalitarian system presented in this book is a familiar one; but it is written with such passionate sincerity and with so many shrewd insights into its workings that it strikes the attentive reader with tremendous force.

The case of Djilas may have some significance in regard to the nature of the opposition currents developing in the Communist orbit. Unlike Harich, the East German oppositionist who is also in gaol, Djilas is not aiming at a regeneration of the party, but rather at definite structural alterations in the nature of Communist society so that the system becomes truly socially owned. His book has been correctly characterized as a Treatise on Civil Government. Above all, he seeks a separation of party and state, a move which would lead to an independent judiciary and the rule of law, and allow the emergence of opposition movements. In other words he seeks the institutional framework under which he sees the democratic socialist movements operating. And whilst with Djilas and Harich in goal, the Hungarian revolution smashed, and the Polish rebels tamed, there is little prospect of this, his book will be welcomed by that part of the left-wing movement in the west which is attempting to define a programme for 'the social ownership of the means of production' in such a way as to eliminate its totalitarian potential. This is the urgent task of the left, and whilst Djilas's book may only increase the political conservatism of some of its readers, it has appeared in the context of a broadening of the anti-Stalinist left movement, which will recognize it as an important contribution to this task.

Neville Hoffman

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6. The judges cannot enter into correspondence about entries and their decision is final.

EDITH SITWELL:

*Collected Poems**Macmillan. London. 4rs. 6d.*

Given the proper equipment of a poet, two things more are yet necessary for the making of poetry that shall be more than verse and more than transient: a constantly developing sensitivity to experience, and the unyielding courage necessary to encompass and express that experience, wherever it may take one. A reader of Edith Sitwell's early poems might not have believed in her possession of these two qualities. Her work up to 1929, and her long silence after it, made it fashionable to dismiss her as a rather gaudy experimentalist, a writer of technically interesting, superficially surprising, verse. Yet on re-reading that earlier work in the retrospect which her *Collected Poems* give us, it is to be seen that the strength and depth of compassion that have made her one of the few poets—perhaps the only poet—able to speak for the foundering human heart in the years of war and the atomic age that follows, were always there.

Even in the days of her 'Bucolic Comedies', 'Facade', 'Sleeping Beauty', and the rest, her vision was basically of

*the real world, terrible and old,
Where seraphs in the mart are sold
And fires from Bedlam's madness flare
Like blue palm-leaves in desert air.*

The Cassandra of that world—our world—she measured herself against Armageddon, when it came, in a poetry able to transmute the overwhelming into the human, able to

*. . . weep for Venus Whose body has
changed to a metaphysical city,
Whose heartbeat is now the sound of
the revolutions—for love changed
To the hospital mercy, the scientists'
hope for the future,
And for darkened Man. . . .*

Yet, what is more difficult and more important, she could transcend and unify that vision until she saw

*. . . all miasmas from the human filth
but as the dung*

*In which to sow great flowers,
Tall moons and mornings, seeds, and
sires, and suns.*

It is by that capacity and that development that such poetry ought to be judged, and not in terms of the petty critical standards that measure out praise and blame in thimblefuls. The five-finger exercises of the early poems made her able to rise to the full orchestration of 'Song of the Cold' and 'The Shadow of Cain'; and critics who are moved by such poems only to talk of incoherence and megalomaniac prophetics ought to consider the limitations of contemporaneity, and listen duly to the words 'God comfort thy capacity'. Perhaps they may decide that Dame Edith's answer, as she 'went on her way', was not after all arrogance, but the decent pride of a poet.

This being said, it is interesting to look back on that development, and see the path it took, which, like most human development, was uneven and at times uncertain. In her introductory notes, Dame Edith quotes Le Corbusier as saying that 'as the result of the Machine Age, "new organs awake in us, another diapason, a new vision. . . ." It was therefore necessary [she says] to find rhythmical expressions for the heightened speed of our time.' Accordingly, 'the rhythms which I practised, in "Facade", were heightened, concentrated, and frequently more violent than those of the poets who had preceded us immediately!' Yet when we re-read 'Facade', what strikes us now is not the applicability of these rhythms to the Machine Age, but rather a curious woodenness of movement in them, as though these poems (which Dame Edith elsewhere likens to butterflies) were only toy butterflies gaily painted. Against the strength and sweep of Corbusier's own architecture, they look decorative and unreal.

It is significant that when at last Dame Edith begins to speak in what we now think of as her own voice (portentous, yet real and communicative), the rhythms she uses alter materially. The sweep of many of the sentences in the later poems gives an impression of length almost too great—they outrun human breath, as the feeling they try to convey outruns ordinary feeling:

*For the heart of Man is yet unwearied
by Chaos,
And the hands grown thumbless from
unuse, the workless hands
Where the needs of famine have grown
the claws of the lion
Bear now on their plams the wounds
of the Crucified.*

After 'Facade', there seems a period of uncertainty, exemplified in the poem 'The Drunkard'—a period-piece that looks now almost deliberately melodramatic—and 'Colonel Fantock', in which the note of self-pity and self-occupation is too clear for comfort. Colonel Fantock, the ostensible subject of the poem, seems like a surrogate of Dame Edith—like her, his pathetic figure is 'a little outside time'; and the poem is weakened by this until it sounds today a little maudlin. Had she gone further in this direction, Dame Edith might never have achieved important poetry, but might have kept on (as too many modern writers do) in search of an imaginary and sentimentalized self. What transmutes her later poetry is the philosopher's stone of self-forgetfulness.

Judith Wright

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY:
The Transformation of Nature in Art
Dover, New York. \$1.25.

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was the son of a distinguished Ceylonese barrister and his English wife. Trained as a scientist he went to Ceylon in charge of a geological

survey; but there became deeply concerned at the destruction and disappearance of the arts of the people. This led him to a study of the tradition behind these arts which brought him finally to a post at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and world-wide recognition as an authority on the history and philosophy of oriental art. A friend of Eric Gill, he was perhaps the chief of those who in recent times have sought to recover the 'traditional' approach to art, which in various forms, all closely akin, underlies the great works of both oriental and Christian civilization. He showed in a profusion of articles how complete is the contrast between the 'traditional' approach and the theories and practice which have predominated in post-Renaissance Western art.

The 'traditional' arts of human civilization had an intellectual and practical character because of the metaphysical and religious doctrines which they were committed to showing forth and the social needs they served. Outwardly they had a use in the economic and ritual life of the community. Inwardly they gave an intellectual delight through the intelligibility of their symbolic forms. The beauty they attained, which we now tend to prize in a purely 'aesthetic' way, was attained in and through this commitment to use and meaning. If we wish to attain a similar splendour of artistic production, it cannot be done either through a mere surface imitation of ancient styles or a restless search for new mannerisms but only by work in the same spirit. By contrast, 'modern' art since the Renaissance has gloried in a more and more total rejection of any 'enslavement' to use or meaning: it has sought to be autonomous, to exist simply for its own sake. To enforce this it has broken its links with doctrine and also made a divorce between 'fine art' and the merely useful production

of things. For Coomaraswamy, this double sundering harms both the artist and the ordinary run of men. 'The artist loses by his isolation and corresponding pride, and by the emasculation of his art, no longer conceived as intellectual, but only as emotional in motivation and significance; the workman loses in that he is forced to labour unintelligently, goods being valued above men.' Coomaraswamy's ideal is not that the artist should be a special kind of man but that every man should be a special kind of artist, a skilled worker whose production of utilities is at the same time meaningful to the mind and pleasing to the aesthetic sense. Only thus can the producer be a whole man and a fully responsible workman. Implicit in this is, of course, a criticism of our present form of industrialism.

The main weakness in Coomaraswamy's account is that, not satisfied with showing the basic similarity of the 'traditional' approach in different civilizations, he goes further to claim an identity of theory which does not exist, even bending his wide scholarship to a selective and partial reading of the evidence at this point. For him the classic Hindu theory of art is the norm, and the Vedantist philosophy underlying it the true doctrine of reality. He holds that the beauty experienced in aesthetic intuition at its height is quite strictly the Divine Beauty: art is absolutely identified with religion ('Art is religion, religion art, not related but the same') and the ideal beauty tasted by the spectator is 'indistinguishable from the gnosis of God'. This idea, perhaps a natural outgrowth of oriental thought, is, in spite of Coomaraswamy's efforts to suggest otherwise, abnormal and rare in the Western tradition.

It would have been better to rest content with demonstrating the general likeness and respecting the irreducible differences.

James McAuley

CHIANG KAI-SHEK:

Soviet Russia in China: A Summing Up at Seventy

Harrap. London. 37s. 3d.

The net result of President Chiang Kai-shek's somewhat sketchy 'summing up at seventy' (he was born in 1886) is a warning that peaceful co-existence with the Communists will inevitably lead to the downfall of the Free World.

President Chiang ruefully reminds his readers that he is both an expert in, and a victim of, co-existence. Between 1922 and 1948 his Kuomintang party repeatedly tried to form coalition governments with the Communists. Every time these experiments ended in disaster, the Kuomintang discovering that its Communist partners used their positions to conspire to grab total power.

Most writers on Soviet-Chinese relations have asserted that Stalin had little confidence in the ability of the Chinese Communists to grab power, and that he favoured working with Chiang instead of Mao Tse-tung's outfit. The story President Chiang tells is entirely different. He describes the duplicity of the Kremlin's China policy, and the cold blooded cynicism of the Soviet agents on the spot in charge of carrying out this policy.

Stalin's 'visible' policy towards the lawful Government of China looked correct. Behind the scenes, however, his agents relentlessly continued to organize, aid and encourage the Chinese Communists against the Kuomintang regime.

In the author's view, without Soviet support the Chinese Communists could never have developed into a gigantic force of anti-nationalist and anti-democratic saboteurs.

Whether he is right or wrong on this point is hard to say. Objectivity is surely not one of the remarkable characteristics of the vast literature about the development of modern China. Original and reliable source

material is comparatively scarce, and in trying to evaluate the events of the past thirty or forty years one must fall back on testimonies of witnesses who are unavoidably prejudiced.

One could hardly expect President Chiang to write impartially about a struggle in which he played a decisive part. Yet his 'summing up' impresses the reader with its dignified and factual tone. He writes as a soldier who recounts the inside story of battles he lost in a war which—he is confident—can still be won. Reading his book one may forget that there must be other sides to the story.

Despite the occasional heavy going, Chiang Kai-shek's book is worth the effort of ploughing through it. For besides filling in gaps in our knowledge on what happened in China it gives a well documented warning why the Free World should be careful in accepting the Communist idea about 'co-existence' as a base for practical policy. History surely doesn't always repeat itself. But when it does the results can be mighty unpleasant. *Emery Barcs*

E. L. MASCALL:

Words and Images

Longmans, London. 12s. 6d.

E. L. Mascall, a distinguished Anglican philosopher at Oxford, engages with the contemporary Linguistic Analysts on the question of theological discourse.

When we make such statements about God's existence as 'God exists', 'God is a necessary being'; or about His attributes, 'God is omnipotent', 'God is merciful'; or about his 'revealed' nature, 'God is Triune', what exactly are we talking about? For the strict empiricist, of course, for whom words only have meaning in so far as they directly signify observable material things of our sense-data, we are talking about nothing at all. And again, for the modern logical empiricist such statements are neither true, that is verifiable in terms of direct sense-

experience, nor false, as though the state of affairs signified by 'God exists' or 'God is merciful' were possible or conceivable but in fact was not actually realized. In other words, theological statements are neither true nor false but are 'meaningless', which is to say that no evidence of any kind would have any relevance for the verification of their truth or falsity. This purely logical criticism of theological utterances is something new and was first explicitly developed in our own times of grace by that philosophical *enfant terrible* of the nineteen-thirties, Professor A. J. Ayer, in his famous, or notorious, work *Language, Truth and Logic*. Wielding the Verification Principle of the Vienna Circle like a flaming sword, Ayer had no difficulty in banishing metaphysical and theological statements as empirically unverifiable and so meaningless. Unfortunately the Verification Principle—Ayer's Razor, as one might call it—was a little too drastic in its operation because it left moral propositions, as well as its own unverifiable self, without any visible means of support, and the later Analysts, following Wittgenstein, have largely rejected it.

Wittgenstein himself, indeed, did not, even in his earlier work, the *Tractatus*, subscribe to the Verification Principle, and in his later works his whole method of philosophical analysis is based upon a theory of meaning quite contrary to that of Ayer and the Logical Positivists generally. According to Wittgenstein, to ask what a word or expression 'means' is misleading in that it leads us to think that a word can only be meaningful if it refers directly to some designable object, as 'Fido' refers to dog Fido. But referring or description is only *one* use of language and there are many other linguistic uses—questioning, confirming, prescribing, commanding, exhorting, etc.—which are all meaningful. For Wittgenstein, a

word or expression is meaningful if it has a significant use in ordinary language, so that many propositions will be meaningful even though they are not verifiable in terms of describable facts. And again, for Wittgenstein, philosophical analysis consists in examining the ways in which we use language in what he calls the different 'forms of life'. No propositions can be ruled out *a priori* as meaningless; we must first patiently examine how they are used.

Now when we examine theological statements, what do we find? Have they a significant use? Certain among the Analysts admit that they do. Thus Professor Braithwaite and Mr R. M. Hare both claim that theological statements are meaningful on the ground that the use of theological statements is like that of moral statements, namely the expression of attitudes or intentions. For Professor Flew and others, they have no real use at all and must be rejected as meaningless.

This then is the context of Mascall's discussion. He begins first by examining critically Ayer's rejection of the sentence 'There exists a transcendent God' as having 'no literal significance', and shows very clearly how Ayer's whole position depends upon his own arbitrary private definition of 'verifiability' and 'meaningfulness'. Again, Ayer, together with all empiricists ancient and modern, makes the gratuitous assumption that perception consists solely in 'the registration of a sensible particular, whether that be known as a sense-datum, as a sense-object, as a phenomenon or by some other term'. Mascall is no doubt right in this: the empiricist reduction of perception to the sensing of the qualities of things has a great deal of plausibility at first sight, but, as three hundred years of unsuccessful experiment in trying to make it work ought to have shown, it is nothing more than a prejudice. As Quine has remarked somewhere,

we would all like to be empiricists but the facts will not allow us.

Having boxed Professor Ayer's ears, Mascall seems to assume that he has disposed of the Linguistic Analysts as a whole. But Ayer's position, as I remarked before, is not shared by the majority of contemporary Analysts who follow Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's theory of meaning, and the technique of philosophical analysis founded upon it, is in fact not bound up with any kind of empiricist or positivist epistemology, and his rejection of theological propositions in the *Tractatus* is dictated by quite different reasons than those of Ayer and the empiricists generally. Mascall's criticisms then, valuable as they are, do not touch Wittgenstein and the Wittgensteinians.

This weakness in his discussion is brought out in his examination of Professor Braithwaite's view of theological statements. According to Braithwaite, theological statements do not have the linguistic function of referring to or describing some special class of supernatural, non-empirical, facts; they are rather expressions of the asserter's intention to follow a specific policy of behaviour. Thus Christian beliefs are proclamations of 'intentions to follow an agapeistic way of life'. There is, of course, something to this; but, if theological statements do not refer to or describe any facts at all, then it would seem that, for Braithwaite, Christian theology and belief can be meaningful even if God does not exist and without regard to the truth of the historical facts concerning Christ and the Church. This is surely a very bizarre conclusion and one may well echo the sentiments of the Frenchman who, hearing of Comte's 'Religion sans Dieu', commented, 'Mon Dieu, quelle religion!'

Mascall's criticisms of Braithwaite's position are quite acute, but in a sense they remain external and do not touch upon the nerve of

Braithwaite's argument. What would need to be done would be to examine the Wittgensteinian notion of linguistic use, upon which Braithwaite relies, and to show that even though perhaps the primary function of religious statements is to express 'agapeistic intentions', nevertheless there must be something in the contexts in which such statements are appropriately used which makes their use meaningful. And this something will be describable, or such that verifiable true propositions can be expressed of it.

In the latter part of his book Mascall sketches out a theory of his own concerning religious discourse. How is it that our language, which is framed to express what we know of finite things, can be extended to speak of the trans-finite? Mascall replies by reformulating the Thomistic theory of analogy which, as he says, seems to have been overlooked by the contemporary Analysts. Then, in a final section, Mascall discusses images and their place in theological discourse. As he points out, the Bible makes little use of metaphysical terms and presents its assertions more in images. Mascall's remarks on what he calls 'the epistemology of the image' are extremely suggestive and have repercussions on the theory of art as well as on theology. One wishes that he had pursued this question a little more deeply and without the rather irritating oracular style he seems to have picked up from Dr Austin Farrer whom he cites copiously.

Taken as a critical survey, rather than an exhaustive treatment, Mascall's discussion is very well worth while and largely justifies his conclusion that 'the discourse of Christian theology and religion is neither psittacistic nonsense nor disguised pep-talk, but is rational conversation, albeit rational conversation of a unique type which has its own peculiar method and discipline.'

M. J. Charlesworth

PITIRIM A. SOROKIN:
The American Sex Revolution
Porter Sargent. Boston. \$3.50.

Sorokin is a Russian-born sociologist who has had a strenuous life both socially and intellectually. A founder of the Russian Peasant Soviet in 1917, he opposed the Bolsheviks, was imprisoned, and finally deprived of his professorial chair and banished from Russia. He went to America where he became the first professor of sociology at Harvard.

Sorokin reviews the destructive effects on American civilization of the revolution in sex standards and behaviour over the past few decades. One index of the revolution is that whereas in 1870 there was one divorce for every 33.7 marriages contracted, today there is one for every 2.5 to 3. As a result of the mounting number of divorces, separations and desertions, twelve million of the forty-five million children in the United States do not live with both parents. Pseudo-scientific doctrines, which merely give expression to the overwhelmingly secular and materialistic values of a 'sensate' civilization have helped tear down the traditional framework: sex is accorded primacy amongst human drives; restraint and chastity are held to be dangerous and unhealthy; nuptial loyalty gives way to enlightened laxity. Erotic excitation in literature, advertising, journalism, entertainment, art and fashion is all-pervading: 'sex oozes from the pores of American life'. Anyone reacting against the prevailing mode is ridiculed and abused. No one wants to be told that sex anarchy merely deranges and impoverishes the personal life of individuals.

Sorokin sees little value in 'the spasmodic drives against "vice" by various "watch and ward" agencies, chambers of commerce, the Legions and police forces. . . . In fact, they often serve as the best publicity for the prohibited books, comics,

magazines, plays, shows, and lectures.' It might be added that the motives and attitudes of bluenose guardians of public virtue are often contaminated with a manichean strain of hatred of the flesh which is but the obverse of libertinism. A deeper renovation of the personality is required, based on a true view of the nobility of sex. Sorokin sees signs of a polarization taking place: while part of the population plunges deeper into recklessness and cynicism, part is resolutely striving to restore love and marriage to their proper level with a full sense of responsibility to themselves, their children, and other persons. A cleaning of the well of personal life is the best disinfectant of one's surroundings, and is rewarded not only by the experience of 'the grace of total love at its happiest, noblest and best', but also by the release of fresh creative forces in our culture. For the link between cultural creativity and libertinism is another of the myths of vulgar sexology; the truth, as Sorokin shows, is the reverse.

James McAuley

RICHARD WEISS:

The Secret of Individuality

Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 6gs. od.

Heredity, environment: these are familiar enough terms. We envisage the one in terms of physical bodies and physiological processes and, more elusively of genes and cells. Environment, too, we see as essentially physical: the external world of things, forces, phenomena. But now, to these two standard conceptions, Richard Weiss, a Viennese philosopher, now living among us, suggests the addition of a third factor, *transundulation*.

It is to be regarded as the procedure—process, medium:—how is one to express it?—by which are transmitted, from one age to another, emerging here, latent (we must assume) there, patterns of individuality, or individual fate or destiny.

The evidence Dr Weiss adduces is highly suggestive and interesting in itself. In a series of studies of one hundred historical lives he points to the recurrence, in some cases the almost detailed repetition, in individuals whose lives are otherwise chronologically and physiologically unrelated, of attitudes of mind, aims, ambitions, even forms of expression, as well as personal fates: Hölderlin-Nietzsche, da Vinci-Swedenborg, Alexander the Great-Frederick the Great-Hitler.

How are we to account for the startling parallel biographies, which in an appendix Dr Weiss submits to a detailed and ingenious mathematical analysis? From one age to another—if Dr Weiss is right—*something* is transmitted. What is transmitted? Even more tantalizingly, how is it transmitted? For there is no demonstrable physical or physiological medium through which such a pattern may be passed on from age to age.

It will be seen that Dr Weiss's thesis is not a piece of orthodox philosophizing. It has a quality of exploratory daring which is in striking contrast to the finicking timidity of much contemporary philosophy, the slogan of which seems to be 'To keep out of difficulty, keep clear of fundamental problems'.

Dr Weiss suggests that 'transundulation', the transmission from one age to another of a 'pattern' of experiences without any assignable individual 'I's' to act as the bearers of the pattern, only presents a problem while we cling to what he calls 'this illusory belief in the "I"'. For him the sense of individual being, of 'I-ness' which we all cherish is an illusion; the only reality, he contends, is Life itself, expressing itself through these various transient 'bubbles' of being. Looked at in this way, the repetition of a pattern in transundulation 'is no longer a repetition befalling an entity but repetition pure and simple'. The

organism that adapts itself to its environment, to what we call the World, is, on this view, not a true entity, but only a passing expression of something that transcends it and contains it.

The empirically-trained scientist tends to regard the inquiries of thinkers like Dr Weiss as 'off-centre', while they tend to regard empirical science as leaving out too much in its account of experience.

However this may be, Dr Weiss's two volumes may be recommended as presenting, not only a thought-provoking thesis, but in the one hundred notable lives he considers, a brief and scholarly glance over European culture. J. P. McKinney

T. INGLIS MOORE:

Bayonet and Grass

Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 17s. 6d.

NANCY GATO:

The Dancing Bough

Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 16s. 0d.

MARY FINNIN:

The Shield of Place

Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 16s. 0d.

FRANCIS BRABAZON:

Cantos of Wandering

Beacon Hill Press, Sydney, 10s. 6d.

LAURENCE COLLINSON:

The Moods of Love

Overland, Melbourne, 10s. 0d.

In a successful poem, sense, metaphor and rhythm cohere in a structure which satisfies as a whole. By this standard not many poems in these five books are completely successful, largely because of formlessness and linguistic uncertainty. Most of them, apart from Mr Brabazon's, as short poems belong to that indeterminate modern genre in which fragmentary experience is fragmentarily expressed. But even in these, it is rare to find the poet maintaining control from beginning to end: in this line the tone is wrong, in that the rhythm is banal, in a third there is a sudden deflating incongruity of language.

Mr Collinson is particularly prone to sudden lapses of taste and control. Not all his poems are quite as flat as the one that begins:

*You don't know why I love you. Well,
my dear,
if the truth be known, myself I'm not
too sure . . .*

and yet even in the best of them we often come down with a bump. The most obvious fault of his book is that there are too many poems, and therefore too many bad poems, in it; after that what's wrong is the lack of variety, because pneumatic bliss, more or less fully described, is the constant theme. Certainly there's a hint of the spiritual element in these moods of love, but it co-exists very unhappily with the dominant, rather adolescent eroticism.

Mr Brabazon at least maintains a constant level of achievement, but it is of so equivocal a kind that at times I wondered whether he wasn't trying some sort of parody of the 'Four Quartets':

*But do you know the turns of this
stream called life
On which we are driftwood carried
for awhile
And then sink water-logged, or are
thrown up on the bank
For firewood, or for some farmer
To use to build a shelter for his
beasts—*

*Can you discern purpose and direction,
Foresee the next possible event?*

I confess I don't really understand what Mr Brabazon is getting at in his poem, at least in the religious bits; elsewhere it seems only too clear:

*. . . a man not too old or too young
Would cherish his blood in a crystal cup
of his heart
From which, by love's flame, are
distilled two tears
Which diamond her eyes and enhance
the lustre of her brow,
And her wayward curls.
Woman is the most astonishing thing
that God
Has been able to manage with the co-
operative earth . . .*

Mary Finnin's poems are of quite a different order. Chiefly topographical, they focus a meditation upon a place: Glenrowan, Herne Hill, Bacchus Marsh. Again, there is a lack of the variety which one has a right to expect of a well-balanced *book* of poems, and I find the geographical bias rather tedious. Perhaps if one knew the named places very well, one would find these poems evocative; but I doubt it, chiefly because the poet tends to use for all the same vocabulary, which is an unhappy marriage of occasional colloquialism with 'poetic diction'. In these lines, for example:

*The road dust spelt the runic wrath
Of maddened horsemen flying by*
what does the word 'runic' mean?

In the work of Nancy Cato the more obvious errors of Laurence Collinson and Mary Finnin are avoided. Here is a genuine, if rather slight, gift. Again the poems lack variety, but they are disciplined and well thought out—if a word gets into a poem by Miss Cato, there's usually a good reason for it. As a result, many lines and stanzas of hers are pleasing and moving. But again there is a lack of architectonic skill, except notably in 'The Lovers', where the contour of the poem faithfully follows the contour of the experience, as it does also in 'Curved Lines'. Miss Cato has taste and sensitivity, and if her range is narrow and her achievement limited, it is partly at least because she attempts little beyond the accurate delineation of a single mood or thought.

Some of Miss Cato's poems refer to writers—Thomas Hardy, Kenneth Slessor, Keats's 'Grecian Urn'—but she is, I judge, less successful in this mode than Mr Moore, whose poem 'The Singing Swaggie', to Hugh McCrae, ends with a typically neat statement:

*You make, in our world's winter,
New saps of the springtime run:
Baring the blue forgotten,
You hand us the sun.*

Mr Moore's poetry is discernibly that of a scholar, but this does not mean that its range is narrow, for many themes and many locales are present. Not many of his poems succeed *completely*, and his work is like Miss Cato's in offering frequent but unsustained pleasure.

Grahame Johnston

COLETTE:

My Apprenticeships and Music-Hall Sidelights

Secker & Warburg. London. 18s. 9d.

Morbid romanticism and humorous, even witty impressionism are the strange ingredients of Colette's autobiographical sketches, *My Apprenticeships and Music-Hall Sidelights*; and it is a curiously ambiguous Colette that emerges from their pages—ambiguous, but neither subtle or complex. *Music-Hall Sidelights*, a youthful work first published in 1913, tells the story of her initiation into music-hall life after she left her notorious first husband, Henry Gauthier-Villars, in 1906, and these sketches of a travelling theatrical company provide by far the best reading in the book. They are spiced with youthful zest and enthusiasm, and in each of the twenty-four vignettes Colette displays her ability to hit off a scene, an event, a character, with vivid economy. We meet Brague (Georges Wague) relentlessly flogging his actors into some semblance of efficiency, and accompanying the most delicate movements of mime with correspondingly violent language; we meet an assortment of actors, each endowed with his share of temperament and eccentricities; and the hangers-on of the theatrical world, such as the lizard-faced cashier of whom, Colette tells us, she knows nothing except her bust, 'always bent forward, from her habit of writing and her desire to please'. In these shrewd humorous sketches she creates all the bustle and gaiety, irritation and dreary routine of a touring company. Yet what is all

REVIEW
this but the zest of an emancipated Colette, free at last from the morbid intrigues of M. Willy—the self-styled ‘author’ of her own books.

It was at M. Willy’s command that she began to write, in a school copy-book, and ‘with complete indifference’. The result was *Claudine à l’Ecole*, at first despised by M. Willy, later rediscovered and published, at his insistence, under this pseudonym. Colette reveals ‘the boredom of having to set to work . . . under pressing and precise direction’. Then why do it? The answer is said to be found in the dominating personality of M. Willy. She reveals his creation of himself as Henry Maugis in *Claudine à Paris*: his subterfuges and vices; his flagrant and unfeeling liaisons; his arrogance, dishonesty and unspecified perversion. Yet all this Colette suffered, she would have us believe, through fear of this degenerate rake. She endured his exploitation of her talent, his scandalous bestiality; and at the end

allowed herself to be dismissed, cheated even of the minor satisfaction of deserting him. So long and tenaciously did she cling to her unhappiness.

Yet it is scarcely more than a pathetic story. For the real clue to Colette’s behaviour is in her vision of herself as a romantic spirit, wrapped in the ‘melancholy but not unpleasing gloom’ to which Mrs Radcliffe was so addicted. You can learn to live only if you are unhappy. ‘There is no virtue in felicity. To endure without happiness and not to droop, not to pine, is a pursuit in itself, you might almost say a profession.’ It was certainly Colette’s profession, and *My Apprenticeships* records her success in the practice of it, and her ‘desperate determination to suffer from love’. So it is hardly surprising that, at least at this period, her other exacting profession, writing, should seem to have been pursued with less than whole-hearted devotion. *Leonie Kramer*

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DON WHITINGTON
Treasure Upon Earth
Georgian House, Melbourne. 21s.

There is nothing wrong with Whittington's material: he has conflated aspects of several different careers and situations in Labour politics to give a fictional biography of a Labour politician who finally goes over to the other side and is destroyed politically at the height of his career. Morally he is destroyed long before by his incapacity for personal love and loyalty in private life and the grime and falseness of the road to the top.

But it is not a good novel, or even a passable one as a literary performance. Whittington has tried to use the fictional form as a vehicle for an impulse which is not that of a novelist at all. It does not work; and this is not primarily because he is a mediocre stylist—that has never been as great a handicap in novels as in other kinds of literature—but because he lacks the novelist's essential gift of creating anew a world of people and situations.

What he should have done with his material I don't know. The law of libel and other pressures make it difficult to write the only sort of thing which one can imagine being successful, a set of notes, portraits and anecdotes about real people and the things that have happened.

The political field is one of the richest in Australian life for those who want to study people in action. Particularly in the 'Labour Movement' the pressures are so much greater than in most other areas that the drama and farce, the beastliness, grotesquerie and occasional nobility jostle one another in an extraordinary way. It is a pity that somehow it never gets told; by the time that the formal biographers and historians get to it the reality has largely evaporated.

Eric Symonds

REVIEWS

A. A. PHILLIPS

The Australian Tradition

Cheshire. Melbourne. 195. 6d.

These collected critical pieces from *Meanjin* and *Overland* chew the fat once more about the old ob-
sessional topics of Australian literary discussion. What is, or should be, the specifically 'Australian' quality in our literature? How far are writers inhibited in their native vigour if they suffer from a sense of colonial inferiority and adopt the Cultural Cringe? What of the bush tradition, democratic radicalism, and the romantic discord between the wild and the tame, Vitality and Respectability, which influence our literature? In a Welfare State, where private patronage is lacking, should we 'elevate the People to the role of Patron of the Arts', and if so how to avoid bureaucratic obfuscations through committees which 'take refuge in compromise, or are be-

fogged by log-rolling competitions, jealousies and clique-wars'?

A. A. Phillips is an intelligent critic within the range of literature that interests him. He is perceptive, for instance, in analysing the form and intentions of a Lawson or a Furphy. He uses his framework of nationalistic-democratic judgment effectively in attributing to the sense of colonial inferiority certain defects in Henry Handel Richardson: the lack of vitality in the prose and the failure to present Australian characters in their full variety. There is probably a good deal in this; yet such quasi-sociological explanations are never complete or sufficient and they remain external to the work. They are also hard to prove, and may be quite wrong. He is wrong, I think, in analysing Brennan's faults of matter and style as resulting from avoidance of local influences. The trouble lay deeper within his individual mind and art.

James McAuley

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

The article by A. G. DAWES is based on research in the history and sociology of Australian Rules Football for a thesis which is in the library of Melbourne University.

RUSSELL KIRK is research professor of politics at Long Island University and also teaches at the New School for Social Research in New York. Author of a number of books on political and academic problems, he is also editor of the quarterly *Modern Age*.

Sydney journalist PETER HASTINGS was a correspondent in New York for some years.

After the success of *They're a Weird Mob* it was disclosed that NINO CULOTTA was an Australian, John O'Grady, whose varied career has now taken him to Samoa as dispenser at the Apia hospital.

D. C. MUECKE is head of the English Department at Newcastle University Col ege.

Polish painter MAXIMILIAN FEUERRING held for some years the chair of Fine Arts at the International UNERA University before coming to Australia.

Now in retirement, M. F. DIXON was head of the ABC news department.

NEVILLE HOFFMAN is secretary of the Socialist Forum in Melbourne.

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